

Bygone era saved in film



While Beijing has yet to be immortalized in a famous film, Ning Ying hopes her Beijing Trilogy has at least captured its spirit. Her films recall the final days of Old Beijing – before the city began tearing itself apart to modernize at a breakneck speed.

Read more on Pages 12-13



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Foodies serious about school eats

Beijing has dozens of cafeterias offering fantastic meals for less than 10 yuan – as long as you don't mind sharing a table with noisy young students.

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Horseplay hits the road

Stylish, healthy and natural though it may be, practical it is not. Still, local equestrians would rather you ride horses or take other green transportation.



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Designer bags at Web boutiques

A Louis Vuitton, Prada or Dior bag just seems ordinary compared to these clever purses and totes from famous European makers.



Social security to include foreign workers

By Yao Weijie

Starting next month, foreigners with work permits will be part of China's social insurance system: whether they want to or not.

The Department of Human Resources and Social Security has been drafting a revised version of the Social Insurance Law that is expected to take effect next month. Among many changes is a requirement that foreign workers be brought into the nation's social security pool.

The details as to what type of insurance they will receive and how payments will be collected will have to wait for the final revision, Xu Yanjun, deputy director of the social insurance center, said last week.

The law, which would take effect July 1, requires foreign workers to contribute to the nation's social security pool and in turn qualifies them to draw on the system for coverage, Xu said.

As of last year, the nation had issued work permits to 231,700 foreign nationals.

"Excluding foreigners from the social insurance system seems unfair. We should have equal rights and responsibilities," said Tilde Lewin, a writing teacher at an international school in Beijing.

But despite some workers' enthusiasm, China's social insurance system may be more complicated than what foreign nationals are accustomed to.

China's social insurance system has two stated goals: combating poverty and helping people save extra money in state-managed accounts.

Foreigners would most



A foreigner seeks work at a job fair in Fujian.

CFP Photo

likely only be eligible for the second form of insurance, and it would not be available nationally, said Yang Yansui, professor of School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University.

To avoid making workers pay into multiple social security systems at the same time, the government has signed agreements with Germany and South Korea that would exempt foreigners from paying into Chinese social security if they show proof of payment into a similar system in their home country.

Workers from German and

South Korea who still pay into Chinese social insurance for less than 15 years would be allowed to close out their pension accounts and receive a one-time payment when they depart from China. However, workers who pay into the system for more than 15 years would not be allowed to draw on their contributions.

The bilateral agreements are expected to be a source of many other conflicts in the system.

Chinese citizens, for example, who are already paying into the system have an extraordinarily difficult time drawing on their funds if they choose to leave

China, and few countries are willing or able to help them convert their contributions, Yang said.

That agreements have been signed with only two other countries may also detract from the success of the new law.

"Much of the new social insurance law is written with the presumption that all countries will sign these bilateral agreements. But before that, China needs to work with other members of the international community to stipulate how payments and transfers between the systems are to be conducted," Yang said.

"Otherwise, we will be forcing

foreigners to participate in a system that cannot benefit them."

China is currently in talks with several other countries to discuss the signing of mutual exemption agreements that would help prevent double payments, Xu said.

The European Union Chamber of Commerce has written to the Department of Human Resources and Social Security asking that insurance payments by its citizens be made optional, citing the shakiness of the current draft law.

Details of the law will only be made public when it takes effect on July 1.

City seeks to revive Dragon Boat culture



By Li Zhixin

Last Saturday, Beijing Tourism Administration (BTA) invited representatives from foreign agencies to observe the Dragon Boat Festival in Yangqing district. Those in attendance learned to roll *zongzi*, sampled tofu and cheered for dragon boat racing teams.

Administrators said similar activities were observed in the capital's other 15 districts, namely the lavender blooming in Miyun district; the Hakka cuisine of Mt. Yunfeng; the hanging of blessed scrolls on the trees in Fangshan District's Yunju Temple; and the lotus lamps at Yunmeng Natural Beauty Spot.

This year was the tourism administration's first attempt to integrate the city's cultural and tourist resources in celebration of the traditional festival, which has seen a decline in recent years.

Legislature meets to curb metal pollution

By Li Zhixin

On the eve of World Environment Day, the Ministry of Environmental Protection announced plans to push legislators to pass new laws that would curb recent incidents of lead pollution.

There were 14 cases of environmental pollution by heavy metals last year and another seven cases during the past five months. The poisonings affected more than 4,000 people.

Deputy Minister Li Ganjie said the policy would include effective measures to stamp out metal pollution during the next five years.

Li said the ministry has made great efforts to address ongoing environmental threats to public health.

"There has been great prog-

ress in ensuring access to safe drinking water and controlling the release of heavy metals," he said.

He said the central government allocated 1.5 billion yuan last year to support comprehensive prevention and control efforts, and to develop and extend new technologies to protect the environment from pollution by heavy metals.

The ministry has also been more conservative with its estimates of the environmental impact of new constructions. The ministry rejected or suspended 59 projects that failed to meet its requirements despite their investment of 90.4 billion yuan.

"The ministry has erected a barrier to block projects that would be high energy consumers or resource abusers, as well as low-level projects that

waste construction energy and resources," he said.

China's overall environmental situation is still very serious, he said.

Although some environmental quality indicators improved during the last year, surface water pollution of the Yellow River, Liaohe River and Haihe River remains severe. The collapse of biodiversity has continued unchecked, and the drain of genetic resources is almost irreversible.

In rural areas, domestic pollution has increased in many regions due to an overuse of fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture. The pollution of livestock and poultry farms and mining activities in rural areas is worsening as urban pollution shifts to the countryside.

45 students take stand against college exams

By Xinji Letu

Millions of high school students across the nation struggled with the annual college entrance examinations on Tuesday and Wednesday.

However, two examination rooms created for the first batch of 45 students at South University of Science and Technology of China (SUSTC) in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province went empty.

The students' absence means that the diplomas they will receive in four years will not be recognized by the Chinese government.

But that was the plan from the beginning.

The newly-built university is widely regarded as the country's first test of a new educational system that would give students better training and prepare them for innovative research. A model the students support – even at the cost of government recognition.

"If those 45 students capitulate and take the national exam as demanded by the government, the reforms that SUSTC is attempting will die," said Xiong Bingqi, deputy director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, a non-profit organization that studies public education policy.

SUSTC, founded by the Shenzhen Government in 2009, is attempting to create an independent research-oriented university that can grant degrees and diplomas without the authorization of the government.

Many educators look to the new university as a last hope to overhaul China's current higher education system, which is plagued by poor teacher quality and increasing red tape.

The reform effort has faced serious challenges. At the end of April, the Shenzhen government required SUSTC's vice presidential candidates to



The university is the country's first test of a new educational system.

CFP Photo

bear official titles. Last month, the Ministry of Education demanded that all its students take the National College Entrance Examination.

"What these official departments are doing is attempting to subvert the reforms and drag SUSTC back into the traditional model of a public-funded university – something that goes against the very spirit of this college's operations," Xiong said.

In a show of solidarity, the 45 students posted an open letter early on the Internet announcing their boycott of the exam system.

The students expressed their faith in the SUSTC model, and said the exams were pointless because they have been studying at the school since March.

"These students are well aware of what they want. From the moment they chose SUSTC, they knew they did not care about things like government-certified diplomas," Xiong said. "Their better training will win them recognition from private enterprises and foreign universities."

The National College Entrance Exam and the nation's knuckle-dragging higher education management have long been viewed as the ailing ghosts of a broken system of central planning.

The government has already announced its commitment to long-term educational reforms during the next decade – reforms that should give universities more autonomy in the admission of students and

granting of degrees.

But the ministry still holds the exclusive right to recognize degrees, "which ultimately means it has oversight over every enrollment, every subject and every teacher," Xiong said.

Xiong said enabling universities to grant degrees on their own is the key to real education reform.

"What we see here is a university and its students who are leading the charge for reform. We hope the relevant official departments will acknowledge the expectation that society as a whole has placed on this new university, and make a real effort to commit to their promises of educational reform and development," he said.

Student who killed to hide hit-and-run executed

Yao Jiaxin, the university student who stabbed a young mother to death to cover up his hit-and-run accident, was executed Tuesday in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, with the approval of the Supreme People's Court.

The 21-year-old student of the Xi'an Conservatory of Music was convicted of murdering Zhang Miao last October in Xi'an to prevent her from reporting that he struck her with his car.

"Yao stabbed the victim's chest, stomach and back several times until she died. The motive was extremely despicable, the measures extremely cruel and the consequences extremely serious," the court said.

Yao surrendered himself to police in the company of his parents four days after the murder. The court did not consider this cause for leniency.

Yao's case has been a lightning rod for national discontent with the reckless behavior of wealthy youths.

His execution on Tuesday attracted about 1.35 million online postings from Internet users on Sina Weibo, one of the top microblogging services.

"The case is a show of judicial impartiality," said a Xinhua commentary released Tuesday.

A person's right to life should not be violated, no matter whether he or she is strong or weak, poor or rich, the commentary read.

In spite of his "higher education," Yao brutally murdered a woman after he hit her with his car, it said. "Only by bringing him to justice can we uphold justice and honor the dignity of the judicial system."

The case observed due judicial procedures during the past several months. The judicial organs have guaranteed the defendant's various rights, including the right to cite and examine proof, defend and appeal, it said.

In response to public concern, the trials were open, with family members of the families and hundreds of journalists and students attending, it said.

The ruling was made independently by the court in accordance with laws and based on facts, without interference from administrative agencies, social organizations or individuals, the commentary said.

The commentary urged for greater efforts from parents, teachers and schools to cultivate a healthy personality in children and to educate them about the need to respect others' lives and rights, as well as the authority of law.

(Xinhua)

School teaches how to marry a billionaire

By Han Manman

Want to marry into money but don't know how? Fear not. A local training school is promising to teach the secrets.

"Today, marrying a rich man has become the goal for many of China's Cinderellas," according to Beijing Moral Education Center's promotional material.

The school's new 10-hour program costs 2,000 yuan and promises to send students away with the life skills needed to win the hearts of wealthy men.

Courses include makeup and fashion, etiquette and how to read a man's personality through his facial expressions.

Shao Tong, one of the school's teachers, endorsed the program as necessary for those seeking to marry money.

She said being able to perform well on the first date, the time when they will be most scrutinized, is what leads many women to victory.

"They watch the way you eat, the food you order and how you talk to the waiter to judge if you are wife material," she said.

Since its opening, the school has received attention from many local women.

Instructors advise going to places that the rich frequent, such as fancy bars and private clubs, learning proper res-

taurant and dining etiquette, studying formal dress, staying indifferent when presented with luxury gifts and avoiding insincere flattery.

China has more billionaires than any country except the US. According to the Forbes 2011 rich list, the mainland almost doubled its billionaire count during the last year.

Experts pointed out that the school's program reflects changing attitudes towards love and marriage. Many young women who are postponing marriage due to financial concerns see marrying money as a shortcut to happiness.

A recent survey conducted

by the Women's Federation of Guangzhou found that 60 percent of college girls want to marry men born into rich families who stand to inherit large amounts of assets from their parents.

Columnist and commentator Lu Guoping said that while it is not wrong for women to want to marry a billionaire, their worship of money and abuse of marriage as a tool to buy success does not deserve to be encouraged.

"The popularity of this course only shows that social values have changed. It's a tragedy for modern women," he said.



Since leaving the state program, Li Na has been able to arrange her own sponsor. CFP Photos

Li Na may launch new era for commercial sports

By Chu Meng

Tennis superstar Li Na made the front page of every Chinese paper last week as she hoisted up the Suzanne Lenglen Cup.

Li became China's first singles winner of any Grand Slam tennis tournament when she won the French Open last Saturday. But as the excitement surrounding her victory fades, many are asking what's next.

Will the success of this sports icon open the door for an era of commercialized sports development, or will Li's victory be seen as a triumph of the state-run system?

History-making tennis star Li Na posed with her trophy by the Eiffel Tower after winning the women's final against Francesca Schiavone of Italy at the French Open in Paris on June 4.

She appeared confident and outgoing, traits rarely shared by China's Olympic gold medalists.

However, that confidence was unforeseen three years ago when she began her meteoric rise under Sun Jinfang, director of the Tennis Center under the General Administration of Sports.

State-run sports go pro

In autumn of 2008, after the Beijing Olympic Games, Li left the state team to organize her own self-managed team in Paris as she prepared for a professional sports career.

"It was a trial run. The country had only ever had state-run players on state-run teams since the day it was founded," said Yi Jiandong, dean master at the School of Sports Broadcasting of Peking University.

In 2008, the administration was forced to accept that its attempt to turn the Chinese soccer team into a state-professional hybrid was a miserable failure.

Tennis, a unique sport tied to a highly developed series of professional-level commercial events around the world, appeared at the perfect moment.

Sun Jinfang took a great risk in deciding to release Li and four other tennis players, Peng Shuai, Sun Tiantian, Zheng Jie and Yan Zi, to the commercial world.

With its training role over, the administration gave the four a chance to grow from tennis players to professional seeds – something the state-run system could never help them achieve.

"Being a professional athlete means Li Na can organize her own self-managed tennis team, independently choose and fire coaches and trainers, sign with marketing and promotion agencies and accept commercial sponsorships," Yi said.

"Most important, she can participate in whichever competitions and tournaments she wants, taking both trophies and prize money for herself," Yi said.

The state model, by contrast, focuses only on preparing athletes to compete in the Olympics.

However, the self-management proved to be a double-edged sword as the stars ended up in decline – even Li, a player whom



Li Na defeats Italy's Francesca Schiavone in the women's final match of the French Open tennis tournament. (Left)



Li Na's sports marketing and promoting agency has helped her transition from a famous athlete into an entertainment star. (Right)



Li Na (first from the left) and Sun Jinfang (second from the left) pose for a photo together during their time on the state tennis team.

established tennis Kim Clijsters and Svetlana Kuznetsova considered one of the best only five years ago.

Despite her issues with the state-run sports system, Li admitted that she benefitted from it: her family would never have been able to cover her training expenses on their own. When Li was recovering from a knee injury in 2009, she returned to the system for help.

At a post-match press conference, she made a point to thank Sun. "Without her decision to reform, I wouldn't have been able to perform the way I did today."

A commercial twist

In the world media, Li is well accepted, largely because of her English ability, confidence and inspiring personality.

Li is the only Chinese athlete who has openly admitted that she competes in the hopes of winning money. And yet, among all athletes, she donated the most to the earthquake relief efforts in Wenchuan and Yushu in 2008 and 2011.

Li was tapped for tennis training by the national sports system at the age of 7. She had a falling out with the state team when she turned 20, when officials opposed her relationship

with her coach and husband Jiang Shan.

She rejoined the state tennis team after her wedding, but left again in December 2008.

Her departure was part of the "Fly Alone" agreement, a pact signed by the Tennis Management Center that allowed Li and three other players to choose their own coaches and set their own competition schedules.

Her professional career started to soar after signing with the world famous sports marketing and promoting agency IMG Worldwide in September 2009 when she was 27 years old.

Max Eisenbud, IMG's senior vice president, began directly managing Li when she became a quarterfinalist in the US Open in New York.

Eisenbud was also the long-time manager of Maria Sharapova.

"Li Na is a very talented athlete with tremendous potential. She has been largely hailed as being instrumental in advancing the sport within China. I believe that Asia is one of the dramatic growth areas for the next generation of tennis superstars who will be able to compete for the world's biggest championships," Eisenbud said when signing the agreement.

His marketing has brought Li abundant media coverage and numerous commercial sponsorships, which has helped her team participate in more world tournaments.

Shortage of quality

Sun Jinfang hailed Li's win in Paris as a "new milestone in the development of Chinese women's tennis and proof that China's state-run system can produce professionals."

But China does not have sports management companies or agencies, and experts are worried that weak commercial viability could be what is really damaging the industry.

"Because we don't have a strong commercial sports industry, we cannot have our own high-quality leagues for any single sport. We're also in short supply of real superstars in pro sports. We're missing a lot of the basic elements needed to make the industry thrive," said Chen Shaofeng, director of China Institute of Sports Value.

The basis of the sports industry should be domestic competitions, but because the domestic teams are bad, most fans choose to watch the English Premier League and other tournaments.

So far, the most famous Chinese sports icons are NBA player Yao Ming, 110-meter hurdler Liu Xiang, snooker sensation Ding Junhui and Li.

Among the four, not one competes regularly within China.

That ensures that broadcasters won't get significant revenue by airing performances, and neither will sports agencies and related entertainment industries.

Adjusting for the industry's growth is another problem.

"The sports industry has enjoyed more than 20 percent annual growth in the past decade, much faster than the growth of the nation's GDP," said Luo Jie, a representative for the equipment administration center of the State General Administration of Sport. "Shamefully, the sporting goods manufacturing industry accounts for about 80 percent of that growth – that's not something we're happy about," said Luo.

"The European leagues are so successful because they are self-governed and market oriented. When the government gets involved in professional leagues, rent-seeking and corruption follows," Chen said, referring to match-fixing scandals that have been rampant in Chinese soccer.

"Only when the clubs and the players are the true owners of the league can it thrive," Chen said.

What happens when Li Na loses?

Li Na, a tattooed Chinese woman, is not just a new sporting icon but a new face for China, the *Wall Street Journal* essentially said about Li's win.

Li's popular appeal has been enhanced by her antiestablishment reputation, since she broke away from the state's sports administration in 2008, the *Journal* said.

The 29-year-old player embodies the aspirations of young Chinese to challenge convention and take risks. Much has been made in the Chinese media of the flower tattoo on her chest.

But for Li, success brings massive expectations.

AFP reported Li broke down another door for Chinese athletes, who are enjoying a growing presence on the world stage.

An editorial by Xinhua News Agency on Sunday, titled "Li Na is the best PR for China," called her an "outstanding name card for China" and a "brilliant 'diplomat.'" It compared Li to NBA star Yao Ming, noting that both "can speak very fluent English, and both of them have a kind of sense of humor that is appreciated by foreigners."

An editorial on Sina said Li has "conquered the whole world with her unique charm as a lady from the East."

But here a question some Chinese netizens are asking: what happens if Li does not win next time? A survey on ifeng.com asked the same question. Most of netizens responded with positive comments, saying Li is already a hero no matter what happens.

(Agencies)



Local residents walk past an advertisement for Nike with the image of Li Na, who has become one of the new faces of China. Zhong Yang/IC Photo

The third eye

Revel in Li's success, but remember that it's just a game

By Li Zhixin

After 130 years of tennis, a Chinese player's name has finally been engraved on the trophy of a Grand Slam tournament. This is a moment worth celebrating.

Li's victory is significant for other reasons, too. As an athlete who won success outside the country's state-sponsored sports system, she has opened a new chapter in China's competitive sports scene.

Under the state-supported system, winners always first thank the motherland and the State Gen-

eral Administration of Sport. But Li is able to thank her team and fans first without repercussions.

What's more, Chinese fans are able to cheer on Li knowing her sport performance is truly divorced from politics – the mantra of government officials during the Beijing Olympics.

Li's success will propel China's sports reform to some extent.

The government should devote itself to public fitness programs but limit its role as a rules regulator in competitive sports. That duty

should be handed over to commercially or privately operated teams and sponsors.

The spirit of competition will be ruined otherwise. Players will potentially also be under undue pressure if they know their performance may translate to higher pay or better positions back home.

We should let players compete in their individual capacity. Fans all over the world can then immerse themselves in athletic competition without thinking about patriotism or national values. This is what

sport is about.

Of course, pride in one's country won't diminish. We'll be reminded of it every time the national anthem plays and the national flag is raised.

Li has made a great contribution to Chinese sports and set a good example of what an athlete can accomplish. Why don't we use her as a model for our other sports?

— Duan Qigang, senior editor of Scientific Literature Press at China Social Science Institute

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The country plans to launch a yuan-dominated international stock exchange later this year. 126

Here it comes!

Individual traders await international stock board

Traders celebrate

"If there is anything that disturbs me, it's the A-share market," said one trader.

Above the Fuhua Plaza, one of the city's most bustling buildings on East Second Ring Road, stock trader Andreas Wang sips from a delicate teacup and chats with others about their investments.

It is Wednesday, a day without any surprises for the A-share stock market. The Shanghai Composite Index (SCI) kept its narrow volatility of around 2,700 after last month's slump.

The day's morning session has just closed, and the LCD board before Wang showed no sign of a sudden bump.

The A-share market has remained in steady decline for the past two years, with the SCI down 14 percent last year and 2 percent lower so far this year. A recent survey of 2,000 individual traders showed that only 30 percent profited from the A-share market last year.

Though most investors are optimistic about the market, few are able to profit. Wang is among them.

It is a test of investors' confidence and patience, Wang said.

The 31-year-old office worker at a Japanese company was dropping by to check the market during his noon break. In his office, dealing with personal investment via Internet is not allowed.

In securities firm CITICS' 200-square-meter trading room, enthusiastic traders, most of whom are old, wait for the afternoon session to open. The hot-test topic of the day is the coming international board in Shanghai.

The A-share market is basically a place for companies to raise funds rather than a playground for personal investment, Wang said.

"Individual investors are vulnerable and feel like being played as fools, with rocketing IPO

By Huang Daohen

Shang Fulin, head of the country's securities regulator, has given his approval. So has Tu Guangshao, Shanghai's deputy mayor in charge of the finances.

After years of promises, the long-awaited international board for overseas companies to list their businesses in China is nearing takeoff.

But while the news has given individual investors hope at a time when domestic stocks are being rocked by doldrums, others remain skeptical about the promise of this new market.

prices," he said.

Wang expects the international board to be different. He sold his A-shares a couple of days ago despite a big loss and plans to re-invest in the new market.

Coming close

Many government officials have spoken openly about the launch of the new board, but none has been clear about when it will happen.

Last month, Shang, chairman of the country's Securities Regulatory Commission, told a financial forum in Shanghai that the board is very close.

Though Shang gave no exact date for the launch, he was the first high-end official giving the nod.

Since April 2009, when the State Council announced the proposed plan for the international board, there has been no official response or specific timetable.

This week, Shanghai's vice mayor Tu further confirmed the launch of the new board. "As chairman Shang has said, it's coming closer, it must be very close," Tu told a press conference.

"All the conditions for the board have basically been put in place. Next we will see how will-

ing the companies are," he said.

Tu also refused to give the timetable. *Caixin* magazine cited an insider as saying that the government may approve the board by the end of this month and the first listing may occur as soon as October.

Nevertheless, individual investors like Wang who are enthusiastic for the new bourse have reason to cheer: several overseas companies have shown their interest in appearing on the new board.

Coca-Cola, the soft-drink giant, said this week it's in talks to list shares in Shanghai, and HSBC said it aims to raise a significant amount of funds in China, according to Bloomberg News.

General Electric, Unilever and Volkswagen AG are among the multinationals that have expressed interest in listing on the board.

Listing in the Chinese mainland would allow foreign companies to benefit from higher valuations and give them access to the Chinese currency to fund their expansion, said Zhao Xiao, a local economics professor.

For individual investors, Zhao

said this would be attractive as the newly listed quality companies would give them more options in investment.

A double-edged sword?

But many hold a more skeptical outlook on the future of the new board.

Analysts said it is a necessary step to improve the domestic capital market system, but it can also be a threat to current stock market.

Charles Cai, senior editor of Hexun.com, a financial website, said the news of the new board is to blame for the recent poor performance of the A-share market. The SCI has been declining since May and is now at a five-month low.

"Investors are pulling out money from the main board to wait for the new listings," Cai said.

Besides, the history of new boards has left a bitter taste for many investors. The country launched the ChiNext board in 2009, but the Nasdaq-style platform turned out to be a place for speculation, Cai said.

According to statistics from Shenzhen Stock Exchange, nearly 50 of all 209 listed companies in the ChiNext board had poor performances. Nine saw profits decline by more than 50 percent while another 20 suffered a 35 percent slump.

Cai said this would leave investors wondering: will this happen again in the new board?

Professor Zhao said eligible investors are as essential to the development of new bourses as a favorable policy environment.

"A mature capital market calls for knowledgeable and intelligent investors who understand the prospects and risks faced by the companies," Zhao said.

How well can a market function when a majority of investors just want to jump in, grab a quick fortune and run away?

Travel site promises cultural exposure

By Yao Weijie

Three months ago, Arne Bleckwenn and Hinrich Dreiling decided to create an online platform for unique and affordable travel – an alternative to the hostels of Europe.

Wimdu, their creation, is a community that connects hosts who have spare rooms and travelers who are looking for short-term accommodation.

Hosts can use the website to list their properties with pictures and descriptions. Travelers evaluate the reviews of past guests, the amount of privacy and the location and decide whether to book the room.

Now Wimdu is coming to China.

"There is plenty of growth potential for this industry because people all over the world are looking for new ways to make some extra cash and save money," said William James Heathershaw, a Wimdu employee. "Besides, with the globe shrinking, many people desire firsthand experience with other cultures."

The company has seen explosive growth during the last three months.

Its China arm has been funded by Rocket Internet Team, the venture capital firm responsible for sending Groupon abroad. It quickly helped the founders to arrange an international team to launch the site on the mainland.

Half of Wimdu's China bookings have been by foreigners looking to explore cities outside their home base; the rest have been guests coming to China for short vacations.

"There were not many platforms that offered good booking services to foreigners living in or traveling to China," Heathershaw said. His company pounced on the chance to fill the gap.

Many foreign websites have tried to succeed in China during the last decade.

Some, like the non-profit chineseetymology.org run by Richard Sears, have found favor thanks to their painstaking appreciation of Chinese culture. Sears, for example, spent 20 years collecting and sorting archaic Chinese characters for his website.

Commercial websites tend to try adapting their foreign models to suit the China market. MyHeritage, for example, was first available in the US, Canada and England as a way to help families stay connected. It has since expanded to China, where it is competing with Jiapu.com, the Chinese branch of Ancestry.com.

But many of these sites die quickly because they fail to adapt their business to the local market.

"Wimdu is essentially a more offline than online service. Still, it may be challenging to replicate our success with ensuring the quality of our listing and customer support," Heathershaw said.

"But the nature of this website is international – that's not something that needs to be localized."

Is killing twin sons forgivable?

By Zhao Hongyi

Han Qunfeng was once a successful professional senior accountant in Shenzhen. After 15 years of marriage, she had twin boys in 1998, but both were born with debilitating brain paralysis.

Han and her husband had to constantly keep babysitters and a traditional Chinese doctor on the payroll to help their children. The annual monthly expense exceeded 10,000 yuan.

Two years ago, the babysitter resigned, forcing Han to quit her job and take care of the kids herself. It didn't take long before the situation turned desperate.

Last November, Han ran out of money and could not afford rent. In her exhaustion and depression, she fed her two kids sleeping pills and drowned them in the bathtub. She tried overdosing on sleeping pills as well.

She was found by her husband, however, and survived. In April, Han was arrested for double homicide.

The court in Dongguan, Guangdong Province received an overwhelming number of letters asking for leniency.

Han's case is not an isolated incident. In March

2010, a poor mother in Shenzhen killed her two-and-half year-old child, who was also mentally disabled, and jumped into the lake with her child.

A mother in Guangzhou who has twin babies with the same disease told local media on May 30 that she would testify on Han's behalf.

"Families like ours do not receive understanding and help from society," Huang said.

The issue, she said, is there's not enough money or medical support for parents to take care of their mentally disabled children.

A dozen social groups, mostly consisting of mothers, are voicing their opinions on the Internet and to media outlets. They're petitioning the government to spare the woman from the death penalty.

More than 40,000 children are born each year with brain paralysis in China: many suspect that estimate is actually conservative.

Experts have said the country should enact measures to build an effective social network to help the families with mentally handicapped children.

Comment

I can emphasize

I was a mother of such a baby and fortunately, my baby has done OK after medical treatment, training and practice. I understand Han's misfortune and misery. Her act is one out of desperation and a sense of hopelessness for the future.

— Chen Hong, accountant, Shenzhen

Killing should be punished

No matter your excuses, taking a life is a crime.

Some have said that killing

these children while they were infants would have made this a lesser crime. I seriously question the sanity of these people.

You can't say the children brought you misfortune and misery; it's you who have brought misfortune to them.

— Zhou Jinyu, commentator, Nanfang Daily

Understandable

It is clearly stated in our laws the consequences of taking a human life, but what would

you do if you were in her situation? The children, had they lived, would have led an unfortunate life.

— Roderio Garay, expat from Chile

Life sentence is best

Considering the misfortune the mother has endured, a lenient sentence could be best. But she did, after all, commit a serious crime. A life sentence would be most fitting.

— Yang Jinwen, electronic engineer

Expert's view

Prevent misery and help those in need

In developed countries, the government, social groups, communities and families all share the burden of treating babies born with a mental handicap.

Sweden is an example. The country had one of the highest drug-use rates in the 1960s and '70s, and as a result the country had a high percentage of babies born with physical and mental defects.

The Swedish government took on the expense of making sure these people grew up to have productive adulthoods, enabling them to live with a certain standard.

Simultaneously, the Swedish

government persuaded its population to lead healthy lifestyles.

Today, those babies are in their 30s and 40s. They are living basic but sufficient lives under the assistance of their government.

We probably cannot emulate the Swedish effort since China's population is much larger, but we can take similar measures.

We have so many government bodies and agencies, including the central government, provincial government, city government and county government, and community centers and village committees, that we can make some real prog-

ress in this area. Why should our money just go to corrupt government officials who do nothing? Why don't we use this money for those in need?

In the meantime, individuals should strive to live, no matter how difficult their situation. They should have the courage and strength to live a colorful life in spite of challenging realities.

Finally, I would like to appeal to young people who are prepared to give birth: you're part of a family, a community and a nation. Live a healthy life, and live for more than yourself.

— Wang Jun, professor of social science, Peking University

Office workers promote green transport by riding horses

By Wei Xi

Last Friday on World Environment Day, seven horse lovers took to Beijing's streets atop steeds in an effort to promote the use of "green" transportation in daily life.

The seven participants were all members of the China Horse Lovers League, which held its first "national trip on horseback" during the week after World Environment Day to advocate environmental protection.

Similar trips were taken in 14 other cities in China, including Shanghai, Chongqing, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Tangshan.

In Beijing, the seven participants were divided into two groups to travel separate

routes from Gaobeidian in Chaoyang District to Shichahai in Xicheng District and from Badachu in Shijingshan District to Sijiqing Bridge near West Fourth Ring Road.

The horses and formally dressed riders attracted a lot of attention along the way, and were also stopped several times by the police.

The activity raised a heated discussion as soon as video was posted online, as some thought the riders were doing a publicity stunt.

A netizen at a car lovers' forum said that everyone has their own right to choose their mode of transportation, including a horse.



Many say riding horses in Beijing just isn't practical.

Photo provided by China Horse Lovers League

Comment

Not practical to ride horses in Beijing

I personally think the idea of promoting green transportation is good, but riding horses just isn't practical in Beijing.

First, we have to consider the safety of horse riding. If too many people ride horses, it may not be safe for pedestrians and those who ride bicycles.

Second, only a limited number of people can afford a horse. It is expensive to buy a horse, and to keep one would be much more expensive than keeping a car.

Also, we have car parks, but no horse parks around the city.

The traffic congestion in Beijing won't be lessened through more horse riders. It's time to make a practical call for citizens to car pool and for the government to keep the roads in good condition.

— Wang Yan, education company employee

It's the idea that counts

People living in big cities like Beijing suffer a lot from traffic jams, pollution and the high cost of oil. In addition, those who always drive cars lack the chance to do physical

exercises. Riding horses can not only relieve pollution, but also give us a chance to keep in shape.

We better be prepared to deal with manure on the roads though, so that it doesn't impede others.

Most importantly, we want to advocate the idea of using green transportation, and not necessarily horse riding as a way of getting around the city.

— Xie Fang, organizer of the horse riding activity in Beijing

A way to show off

I was very astonished when I

saw the news. Although the participants said riding horses can help them to exercise and reduce pollution, I think they were only showing off.

I checked online and found that a horse costs at least 100,000 yuan, and upkeep is about 80,000 yuan per year.

I think the participants regard themselves head and shoulders above others, or just wanted to make themselves famous.

— Zhou Tianxiao, telecommunications company employee

A group of troublemakers

Those who rode horses on

the streets wanted to show they were different from ordinary people. In fact, they were only causing trouble for the police. Riding bicycles and walking can also promote the idea of low-carbon transportation.

The current traffic regulations in China only prevent carriages from running on main roads in Beijing, but horse riding is not restricted. This recent activity shows that state laws and regulations are not rigorous enough.

— Liu Yuan, multinational company employee



China Open Tickets On Sale Worldwide

The 2011 China Open will be held at the National Tennis Center from September 25 to October 9. During the event, the brand new Center Court Stadium, complete with a retractable roof will be unveiled. On May 26, tickets to the China Open will officially go on sale worldwide. Various ticket types such as grand-stand, day-pass, package and VIP hospitality are available for tennis fans. Hurry up for the limited special on-sale packages! For more information, please call the China Open hotline or logon www.chinaopen.com.cn

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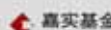
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Japanese government issues medical visa to draw Chinese tourists

By Chu Meng

The Japanese government will issue its first-ever medical visa to Chinese citizens starting next week in an effort to attract more people to pursue medical treatment in Japanese hospitals, said Kenichi Okada, an official from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Japanese embassy in Beijing on Monday.

The validity of the medical visa is three years, allowing single stays of up to six months. People can also apply for multiple entries.

The visa is initially targeted

at the wealthy.

Okada said the first trial medical visa was issued in January to a Chinese male in his late 20s at the Japanese consulate in Shanghai for orthopedic surgery at a university hospital in Tokyo in March.

"The new visa category was created for Chinese and foreigners from other Asian countries wishing to receive treatment in Japan," said Yasushi Yamamoto, a counselor from the embassy.

The tourist visa only allows a single stay of 15 days.

An increasing number of

Chinese people have applied to go to Japan for medical treatment on temporary visas, but only about 100 actually manage the trip every year due to inflexible visa limitations. The medical visa will change that.

Yamamoto said the Japanese government is looking to issue around 1,000 medical visas worldwide a year, including 200 reserved for Chinese citizens. The Japanese embassy and its consulates plan to distribute about 3,000 copies of a brochure introducing Japanese hospitals in English and Chinese.

Detailed information pub-

lished on the embassy's website said that medical visa applicants are required to book a medical appointment in advance, provided by Japanese international medical exchange agencies or tourism agencies. A list of certified medical exchange agencies is available on the website.

Chinese tourism experts see this move as part of a strategy to revive a sluggish tourism industry following the earthquake and tsunami.

Zheng Shuang, an employee from the outbound tourism division of BTG International Travel and Tours, said that the price

of a six-day roundtrip tour of Japan has dropped from 13,000 yuan to 3,500 yuan.

"Even so, few Chinese are willing to risk exposing themselves to nuclear radiation in Japan," Zheng said.

She said the medical visa is actually a tool to motivate the medical tourism industry. It has been widely used by North European countries for decades.

Okada said at the announcement that medical services isn't limited to health check-ups and surgeries, but also include cosmetic surgeries and spa treatments.



Jose Tadeu Soares

Photo by Dong Jing

Portuguese embassy announces it will soon be carbon-free

By Annie Wei

Last week, the Portuguese embassy in Beijing announced it will be the first diplomatic representation in China to voluntarily take part in the Greenhouse Gas Emission (GHG) project.

The embassy bought 50 tons of carbon dioxide from China Beijing Environment Exchange in order to offset the annual amount of carbon the

embassy produces.

Jose Tadeu Soares, the Portuguese ambassador, said the project was initiated last year. Everyone's contribution is important, he said, since environmental issues require every citizen's devotion.

The ambassador said the project was meaningful in China, as environmental protection was a key point in the country's 12th

Five-Year Plan.

Renato Roldao, chief representative from Ecoprogresso, a climate change, energy and carbon management consultancy, said this project is a good way of promoting public awareness of carbon emissions.

The 50 tons of carbon was calculated from daily operational activities, mainly gasoline consumed by the vehicles

owned by the embassy and indirect emissions from purchased electricity; flights and public transportation were not taken into account, according to an embassy report.

The embassy promised to implement a series of measures to reduce waste and energy usage. It also called on other embassies to join in similar carbon reduction programs.

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Molière's work re-staged for charity

By Zhang Dongya

The amateur French troupe The Theater of Lanterns staged Molière's famous ballet *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* at Dongcheng District Culture Center last weekend. It was the sixth drama the troupe has staged to raise money for abandoned children and orphans.

Some 15 members of the troupe performed along with 10 Chinese actors.

"We added more Chinese elements into the play, including Peking Opera and kung fu," said director Isy Chautemps, 48, who joined the Theater of Lanterns in 2008 as its only professional member.

The drama is a comedic ballet written by French playwright Molière in 1670, satirizing the 17th century's bourgeoisie.

Chautemps adapted it by changing a Turkish scene into a Chinese one and adding ancient Chinese poems and popular Chi-

nese expressions.

A Turkish ceremony was replaced by a Peking Opera performance, and Yi Lin, professor of the Central Academy of Drama, directed a kung fu scene. All the performers in the scene are students at the Academy.

"I hope the adaptation will draw more of a Chinese audience and hope they'll have more fun watching," Chautemps said.

The show has gained support from Chinese and French organizations and companies. Its Chinese subtitles were created by professors and student volunteers from Beijing Language and Culture University. Its lighting and costumes were done by Beijing People's Art Theater. Some 10 French enterprises covered the troupe's rehearsals and other expenses.

The Theater of Lanterns has presented five dramas since 2006 and has participated in the Croisements Festival and the French



The Theater of Lanterns troupe raised 100,000 yuan for an orphan charity by staging Molière's famous ballet *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Theater Festival since 2008.

The play ran for three days. The Dongcheng District Culture Center, which has a capacity of 400 people, was nearly sold out on all three days. The troupe raised 100,000 yuan for The Children of Madaifu, a charity that supports orphans in rural parts of Shaanxi, Gansu and Hubei provinces.

To date, the troupe has raised about 560,000 yuan for charity.

"Each year, they raise more than 100,000 yuan for Madaifu's children, and we really appreciate it. And I was really amazed by Isy Chautemps' play. The original work of Molière is fully respected, but at the same time she incorporated modern hip-hop dance and also some Chinese Opera. It was very innovative, colorful and funny," said Anne de Kermadec, a spokeswoman for Madaifu.

Country Fair in CBD tomorrow

This month's Country Fair will be held at the Guanghua International complex in CBD tomorrow. More than 20 participating farmers, vendors and environmental and rural aid NGOs will be there, including Little Doney Farm and Phoenix Commune, organic food vendors like Le Fromager de Pekin and Mr. Rice Wine, as well as organizations like Green Beagle, Peace Women Across the Globe and Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

Where: Office Park (east side of The Place), 1F Tower AB In front of Gori (across from Costa Coffee), Jintong Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am - 4 pm

Cost: free



(By Wei Ying)

A previous Country Fair at Little Doney Farm

Photo by Wang Chen/Holiday 100

Event

Beijing Guardians - real American football

Come join the Beijing Guardians for a two-hour full-contact game of American football. Our games, which include warm-ups, skills drills and tackling training, are open to both beginners and the advanced alike. Don't forget to grab a player's pack at the entrance. Visit beijingguardians.com for more information.

Where: Chaoyang Park, Chaoyang District

When: Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

Cost: free

Tel: 15811480812

Ladies Night at Scarlet Blue

Ladies at Scarlet Blue on Friday nights will be treated to a free margarita and unlimited whiskey-and-Cokes. Free champagnes will also be available for groups. The dress code is classy and sexy. Come enjoy free drinks and a live music performance.

Where: Scarlet Blue Restaurant & Disco, Building 17, Solana, 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Fridays, 8:30 pm - 8 am next day

Cost: free

Tel: 15910561165

Summer weekend at Crab Island

Crab Island, located several kilometers outside the city's urban area, is Beijing's premiere artificial beach destination. Asia Obscura is organizing a trip there. Email asiaobscura@gmail.com for updated details and maps.

Where: Meet outside the Starbucks near the southeast exit of the Dongshishitiao station of Subway Line 2 on Gongti Bei Lu, Dongcheng District

When: Saturday, noon - 4:30 pm June 11

Cost: 100 yuan for the entry

Email:

asiaobscura@gmail.com

(By Wei Xi)

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Animal rescue organization asks for public concern

By Wei Xi

A non-governmental animal protection organization in Beijing is steadily raising awareness of the importance of animal rights.

Ruijia Animal Rescue Voluntary Society, which devotes itself to helping stray dogs, has been pushing for national animal protection legislation for the last three years.

The group was founded in 2008 after villagers of Qingheying, Laiguangying County in Chaoyang District relocated and left behind more than 60 dogs. Informed of the news online, about 30 volunteers took all the dogs to a temporary shelter in Xiaotangshan, Changping District.

These volunteers, who didn't previously know each other, founded Ruijia Animal Rescue Voluntary Society.

Over the years, Ruijia's volunteers have grown to number 300, and at least 40 more dogs have been taken in. To take care of them every day, the volunteers have also hired outside help.

A man who goes by Ye Yao is a volunteer. He said volunteers know each other only by their nicknames and communicate and exchange news mainly through QQ messenger, blogs and microblogs. Every Saturday, they take turns going to the shelter to clean the kennels, feed the dogs and take them to get vaccinations if necessary.

About once a month, someone will contact Ruijia about adopting a dog, but the organization has a very strict adoption guideline.

"Some employees of foreign embassies also come to adopt dogs," said Tiantang, a 24-year-old website editor and volunteer at Ruijia Animal Rescue Volun-



Volunteers bring food and water to Ruijia Animal Rescue Voluntary Society in suburban Beijing every Saturday.

Photo by Wei Xi

tary Society.

Ruijia volunteers comprise many different professions. There are students, entrepreneurs, doctors and retirees, but the majority of them were born in the 1970s.

"It's because the volunteers need to have a stable income," Ye said.

"Volunteers at Ruijia see the dogs as their first concern," said a man surnamed Sun, a 60-year-old volunteer at Ruijia's current shelter in Tongzhou District.

Sun has tended to more than 100 dogs since last September.

Volunteers prepay for the animals' food. "In addition, every weekend they will come with more nutritional food, like ham, chicken and mutton. They cook rice and give each animal an egg," Sun said.

The shelter isn't without its problems, however.

"The shortage of water is the most difficult problem," Sun said. "And volunteers, for all the hard work they've put in, are still misunderstood by the locals."

Sun said people around the area think the volunteers could be spending their money to help people in need rather than animals.

"Funding is also a big problem," Tiantang said. "We hope society can pay more attention to the strays."

Tiantang also said the 12th Five-Year Plan being carried out by Tongzhou District requires the building of a recreational area at the current location of the shelter, so the dogs will eventually have to be moved.

At the end of last year, Ruijia began providing spade and neutering services and vaccinations to strays.

"The foundation only needs 20 yuan per month, but many people would rather spend that on entertainment," Ye said.

"An NGO staffer once told me the best way to protect strays is not through one person doing a lot, but everyone doing a little," Tiantang said.

Ruijia Animal Rescue Foundation

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Are there any nice places for outdoor barbecuing in Beijing?

Most open-air barbecue places are in the suburbs of Beijing. Here are some recommendations:

Houhe

Houhe in Yanqing County is one of the most beautiful outdoor locations in Beijing. You can set up a grill or go fishing. It takes two hours to drive there. Take the Badaling Expressway and get off at the exit to Yanqing. Then drive another 20 minutes northwest until you arrive at Longju Shanzhuang.

Shangzhuang Reservoir

Shangzhuang Reservoir is much closer, only 30 kilometers northwest. Take the Badaling Expressway and get off at the exit to Beianhe, then drive west along Beijing Road until you see a sign for Shangzhuang; turn right. You'll continue going north until you see the bridge of the reservoir.

I want to order some CDs and DVDs from Amazon. How do I get them shipped to China? And how does the Chinese post office or door man handle English addresses?

It usually takes two to three weeks for delivery. The post office can deliver mail to addresses in English, no problem. You can also buy CDs and DVDs on Amazon.cn – you may save some money on shipping costs.

How should I start a conversation in Chinese? Is "Ni zen me yang?" – meaning "how are you?" – an informal greeting? I was taught to use "Ze me yang?" Is that used more often than "Ni hao ma?"

To start a conversation, weather is always a nice and safe topic, no matter in China or anywhere. You may also try "Ni chi la ma?", which means, "Have you eaten?" But both "Ni zen me yang?" and "Ni chi le ma?" are most used between existing acquaintances.

Both my girlfriend and I are on student visas, but we started a small business here in China. We plan to register as soon as we have everything running smoothly. But after the registration, can we get a working visa, or what? We'd like to stay long-term.

Work visas are issued to foreigners who are about to take up employment in China and their families. One way for you to apply for a work visa is to find a company sponsor. Student visas, on the other hand, are difficult to extend.

(By Wei Xi)

Say no to 'arbitrary clause'

On Tuesday, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC) published the first batch of 27 "arbitrary clauses" – vague clauses or contractual wording written by businesses to protect themselves – deemed unfair to consumers.

Managers who are guilty of enforcing arbitrary clauses can be assessed a maximum penalty of 30,000 yuan.

The SAIC gave two examples of consumers falling victim to arbitrary clauses: when they buy items from stores that claim their discounted merchandise "cannot be refunded or exchanged," or when signs forbid people from bringing in outside drinks.

Although the practice of using impartial or vague contracts to exempt businesses from responsibility is widespread, average citizens find it hard to identify what an arbitrary clause actually is.

The SAIC encourages people to report examples of arbitrary clauses by calling 12315.

Some more examples of arbitrary clauses:

- Discounted merchandise cannot be returned.
- You should take sole responsibility for your deeds.
- The company is not responsible for personal injuries while using this venue.
- The company is not responsible for damaged laundry.
- The company is not responsible for any losses due to running out of water or electronic leakage.
- The company is not responsible for losses or stolen belongings.
- Car owners should take responsibility if their car is lost.
- When buyers break the contract, payment is non-refundable.
- Our center has the right to adjust our fees according to fluctuating market prices.

(By Yao Weijie)



Many restaurants have an arbitrary clause that forbids customers from bringing in their own food and drinks.

CFP Photo



Ning Ying

"Bertolucci told me every inch of the screen could not be used hardly. As the director, you have to design every detail. I remember his words when I made my film."

"Film offers compelling advantages as a capsule of history – even more than literature, painting and music. While I did not make many films in the past 20 years, I'm proud that I created something cultural and historical significance."

Vanishing world

Ning Ying's Beijing Trilogy captures a changing city

By He Jianwei

Films make a city.

Rome was celebrated by *Roman Holiday*, Barcelona by *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* and Paris by *Paris, I Love You*. But just try to name a film that really captures Beijing.

While Ning Ying has not been a prolific filmmaker during her 24-year career, she has shown an amazing ability to dig out and expose the soul of a city. Her "Beijing Trilogy," filmed throughout the 1990s, offers a visual record of the capital's transformation.

"This was reality, now it's dying," Ning said after the conclusion of her screening last week at the Ellens Center for Contemporary Art, capturing the mentality of Beijing before it was discovered by the world.

Ning was born in Beijing in 1958. Despite dreams of being a violinist, she chose to attend Beijing Film Academy in 1978 to study sound recording with filmmakers like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou.

After graduation, she continued her studies in directing at Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, where she met Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci and became Bertolucci's assistant for *The Last Emperor* in 1987.

When her studies ended, she returned to China and worked at Beijing Film Studio, where she made her debut film – a commercial short about a woman's life.

But Bertolucci's film was never her goal. "I had big ambitions for my career. I wanted to make a film for the city that I grew up in and that would serve as a historical record for later generations," she said.

The opportunity came in the 1990s, when Beijing began to truly "function like a city." It was no longer a "closed" city. I grew up in the courtyard. The courtyard was a place where people lived. I walked less than five minutes to go to school. Millions of these courtyards made up the downtown area, and anything outside that was the suburbs," she said.

The courtyard was her circle and she seldom ventured out to other places. But urban culture was turning that simple lifestyle on its head.

"I cared about reality, but I saw what I knew as reality was evaporating so fast. I thought that putting it into my films would be a way to capture the true spirit, like taking a photograph of someone before they go through radical plastic surgery," she said. Beijing Trilogy began with a long but unexciting film about a couple being forced into obsolescence – a portrait of ordinary urbanites caught in the winds of social change.

Adapted from Chen Jiacong's novel, the 1993 film *For Fun* depicts the life of a retiree named Old Han. As the gatekeeper of a Peking Opera theater, Han struggles to adapt to retirement. He ambles along streets to a fish market and then to a park, where he meets a street vendor and decides to set up a troupe.

"Bertolucci told me every inch of the screen could not be used haphazardly. As the director, you have to design every detail," Ning said. "I remember his words when I made my film."

For Fun was with a full-length shot of a street scene accompanied by bits of a Kurt Weill song in the background. "In cinematic theory, background music should be significant to the plot. My music was simply a reflection of what was heard in Beijing at the time," she said.

There was an obsession with classical music in the early 1990s. Most shops and bookstores played classical music. In preparing for the film, she devoted a lot of time to researching the city's history for several years, and how it was surviving the economic transition.

Ning's film explored how people dealt with these painful changes when the old system was smashed but the new one had yet to be pulled together.

The second film of the trilogy, *On the Beat*, released in 1995, followed the life of neighborhood police.

She lived with the officers for half a year in 1994 to learn how they went about resolving disputes, but gained little material to use in her film until one officer told her the story of how they had beaten a rabid dog several years earlier.

Ning's film opens with a long shot of an officer teaching a new recruit about their job as they bike through the streets and alleys. "Being a cop means dealing with trivial things," he says.

"I scouted all the hutongs inside Second Ring Road and picked several typical ones as possible filming locations," she said.

She later said she was inspired by the police from Dong-ben to Xie-ben, through hordes, abandoned courtyards and demolished ruins. "My actors complained that it was not true to reality, but I told them it was just a story, and I wanted to show how different hutong and courtyard looked," she said.

After beating the dog, which bit several residents, they are given a new assignment to stop a thief.

And so the conflicts began. People hid their pets and neighbors rattled them out to the police. There were many quarrels with the officers. "The police were direct and cruel, and obviously had no experience with higher education. They look like street thugs as they interrogate the suspect," she said.

"A detective told me that the interrogator must look like even more of a criminal than the suspect. One police school in the US treated my presentation of this like a textbook."

The final chapter of her trilogy, *I Love Beijing*, was released in 2000. The film follows a taxi driver and his passengers who are stuck in traffic during the last changing pace of contemporary China.

The yellow cab acts as a microcosm of the urban scene that has become alien to the only love men with cars and houses.

"Compared with the first 10 years of this century, the last 10 years of the last century changed a lot."

"Film offers compelling advantages as a capsule of history – even more than literature, painting and music," Ning said. "While I did not make many films in the past 20 years, I'm proud that I created something with cultural and historical significance."



Photos provided by UCCA and Goethe-Institut China

1. On the Beat depicts the life of neighborhood police.
2. I Love Beijing follows a taxi driver and his passengers as the attempt to adjust to a fast-changing society.
3. For Fun is a loving but unromantic story about people forced into obsolescence.



3

The untold story of eels

By Charles Zhu

The eel is a fish – a most mysterious fish regarded variously as delicious, vile or magical.

James Prosek, who graduated from Yale, offers an exhilarating tour through the history of the eel: the only fish that spawns in the middle of the ocean but spends its adult life in freshwater.

In *Eels: An Exploration, from New Zealand to the Sargasso, of the World's Most Mysterious Fish*, the author explores its biology in streams and epic migrations in the ocean, and its related myth and lore.

Unlike salmon, which are born in freshwater rivers and migrate to the oceans where they spend their lives before returning to the river of their birth to spawn, the freshwater eel does the exact opposite. It is born in the ocean and then overcomes almost insurmountable obstacles and even crosses over land to find its way into a freshwater river.

They spend 50 to 100 years in those freshwater rivers before migrating back to the place of their birth in the ocean to spawn and die. As adults, some eels will live in a small pond for long years, always waiting for a storm to wash them back to the sea. When a storm actually comes and moistens the eels, they will ooze across the open ground to get to the next portage, form into giant eel balls

and roll downhill, or form themselves into eel braids to climb up and over dams.

But no one has seen them spawning, and the locations of the act are not precisely known. American and European eels spawn somewhere in the Sargasso Sea, and scientists now think they have found the area where Japanese eels spawn.

Nor is it known how they find their way there, or how they find their way into the many rivers where they spend their lives. They can live for a century, spending most of their lives in fresh water, but must return to sea to spawn. And they can travel up to a quarter of the globe to do that spawning.

There is still much to learn about this fish species. Such an obvious question about eels' habitats still remains unanswered. "A lot of scientists ignore personal experience altogether, largely because it can't be measured. That's not necessarily a mistake if you're doing science, but if you're trying to evaluate life on earth, it probably is," Prosek said.

Though now largely shunned in the Americas and Europe, the tender flesh of the eel is highly prized in Asia. Worldwide, freshwater eels bring in billions of dollars and account for about one-eighth of global aquaculture production. They are a multibillion-dollar business in the Asian food market.

Prosek has traveled extensively to tell the story of the eel – from a river in the Catskills of New York to

the traditional eeling grounds in New Zealand; from Europe to Japan and the small volcanic island of Pohnpei in Micronesia, where freshwater eels are worshipped by members of the eel clan.

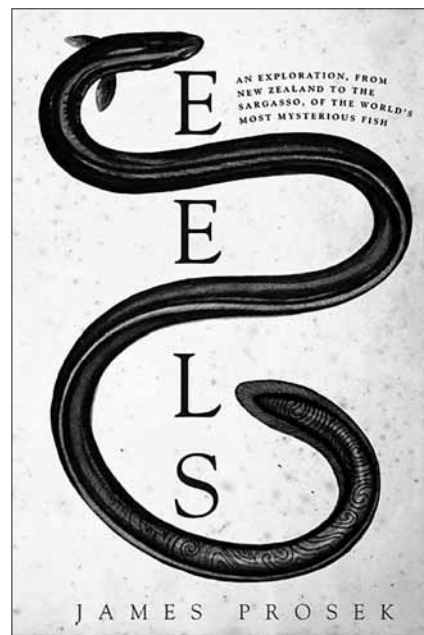
In a colorful and interesting narrative, a style more travelogue than tome, Prosek takes readers through the scientific, cultural and culinary worlds of eels.

The author tells us that what the Pilgrims ate at their first Thanksgiving may have been eels, not turkey, since they are what the natives taught the American colonists to fish for. He also tells the story of an eccentric New Yorker who traps eels using traditional methods and scientists who troll the seas in search of eels' unknown spawning grounds.

He interviewed fishermen, conservationists and scientists to uncover the eels' elusive home in the Sargasso Sea and their spawning places in other oceans of the world.

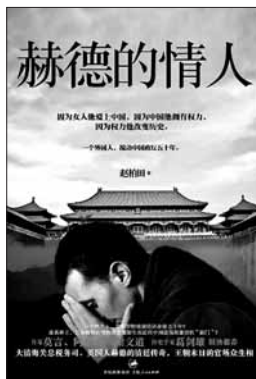
He also warns that though freshwater eels have been here for hundreds of millions of years, their populations are dramatically declining – as much as 99 percent in some areas – due to dams, overfishing, pollution and global warming.

The book is illustrated with etchings by the author. That beautiful art makes *Eels* more than an ordinary fish book.



Eels: An Exploration, from New Zealand to the Sargasso, of the World's Most Mysterious Fish
By James Prosek, 304pp, Harper, \$25.99

Expat romance of the 19th century



The Lover of Hart
By Zhao Botian, 330pp,
Shanghai People's Press,
29 yuan

By He Jianwei

From 1863 to 1908, Sir Robert Hart was inspector general of China's Imperial Maritime Customs Service (IMCS), which played a crucial role in imperial politics and significantly influenced the government's internal reform and diplomatic policy.

Hart made three major contributions to China in the late Qing

Dynasty (1644-1911), including eliminating corruption, improving efficiency and establishing credibility. The IMCS was the most honest department at that time.

He kept diaries to record his 54 years living in China, but he burned several related to love. As a British consular official in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, he met a Chinese girl named A Yao, who gave birth to three of his children.

Chinese writer Zhao Botian attempts to recreate their romance in his debut historical fiction *The Lover of Hart*, revealing the missing part of Hart's life.

"I read two volumes of his diaries in China in 2005. I found that Hart fell in love with a boatman's daughter when he lived in Ningbo. They lived seven years together, travelling from Ningbo to Guangzhou and then Shanghai," Zhao said. "Although Hart burned the part about his lover, I still found traces."

In 1866, when Hart led a group of Chinese officials to visit European countries, he sent the three children to his hometown in the UK. After the visit, he brought his British wife back to China.

Hart only told his children she died in 1865. "No one knows what

happened to A Yao, because there was no material talking about the woman's end," Zhao said. "I realized that the point where historians can go no further is where novelists should begin."

Besides the diaries, he also read letters Hart wrote to his relatives in Britain. Zhao found that in Hart's later years, he confessed his regrets about A Yao.

Zhao has two clues in the book – the odd number chapters are narrations of Hart's son Arthur, and the even number chapter about the twilight of Qing Dynasty told from a third person's view.

"It is like two vocal parts in a duet. From the first part, we see a father's image through the eyes of a son recalling family memories. Another shows the turbulence of Hart's times and how he lived in a historical crevice," he said.

In Zhao's view, Hart was ambitious as he walked the line between expat and Chinese official. "But he was also fragile and sentimental in love. When he wrote letters to relatives in Britain talking about the education of his children, he also said how he missed them and felt guilty for leaving the Chinese woman he loved," he said.

Bookworm book listing

The Bookworm recommends the following best-sellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

Samplandia!

By Karen Russell, 336pp, Knopf, \$24.95

The author's debut novel tells the story of a family that owns a gator wrestling theme park. But their business is soon encroached upon by a fearsome and sophisticated competitor called the World of Darkness. The heroine Ava Bigtree's mother, the park's indomitable headliner, has just died; her brother, who dreams of becoming a scholar, has defected to the World of Darkness in a last-ditch effort to keep their business from going under. Ava is left alone to manage 98 gators.

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe

By Charles Yu, 256pp, Vintage, \$14.95

Every day in Minor Universe 31 people get into time machines and try to change the past. That's where Charles Yu, time travel technician, steps in. He helps save people from themselves. When he is not taking client calls, Yu visits his mother and searches for his father, who invented time travel and then vanished. The key to locating his father may be found in a book.

Please Look After Mom

By Kyung-sook Shin, 256pp, Knopf, \$24.95

On a family visit to the city, Mom is right behind her husband when the train pulls out of Seoul Station without her and she is lost, possibly forever. As her children argue over how to find her and her husband returns to their countryside home to wait for her, they each recall their lives with her, their memories often more surprising than comforting.

(By He Jianwei)



Foodie group ranks campus cafeterias



Hu Miaoyu, the organizer of Dining at University Cafeterias

By Chu Meng

Beijing may be famous for its incredible variety of restaurants, but one group of gourmets says the city's cafeterias are also worth a look.

They meet weekly to search the city's schools for the best food at the best prices and have been compiling a database with estimated costs and descriptions of the various dining environments sure to thrill any thrifty foodie.



A regular 10-yuan meal from a local university cafeteria



The cafeteria at University of Electronic Science and Technology has nice decorations.



The Foreign Students Cafeteria at Central University for Nationalities



Photos provided by Hu Miaoyu

Eating cheap

An order of sweet and sour pork: 4 yuan. A plate of stir-fried lettuce with garlic: 2 yuan. A bowl of rice: 1 yuan. The satisfaction of finding a filling meal for less than 8 yuan? Priceless.

And so lunch went for the 24-year-old IT guru Wang Haizheng, who chose to eat at the No. 2 Student Cafeteria at Beijing University of Technology last Saturday.

Finding ways to spend less than 10 yuan on lunch and dinner has become a hobby for Wang and other members of Dining at University Cafeterias, a gourmet club on the popular website Douban.

Wang first discovered the group two years ago when he graduated from China University of Political Science and Law. Since then, he has made an effort to travel to a different Beijing cafeteria each weekend to sample its offerings.

"I originally joined because I was curious what students at other schools got to eat. It turned into a habit when I realized just how cheap school food could be. But what really got me addicted was how eating in a cafeteria helped me remember my school days and escape the pressures of work," Wang said.

School culture

The gourmet group, organized by the 38-year-old Beijinger Hu Miaoyu, counts some 5,000 members. He and up to 50 of the group's members meet once or twice a month for an organized dining event.

Hu's name may be familiar to music fans who know the Modern Sky label, through which he published a new-age album in 2007. He is also one of the organizers of the Strawberry Music Festival held each summer on the outskirts of Beijing.

The gourmet group began in 2004, when students invited him to eat at their cafeteria after he finished a promotional event at Beijing Forestry University near Wudaokou.

"It was a self-serve cafeteria and only cost 10 yuan per person, but the food was as good as what you would find in a lot of the more reputable restaurants," he said.

Hu continued to eat with students at each of the nine universities on his 10-stop

The No.1 Cafeteria at Tsinghua University

tour that year.

"Some of those students followed my entire tour, not only for my music, but because they were curious what people were eating at other schools. When the tour ended, I started the online group," he said.

Gradually, the group's participants branched out from the campus to the workplace. He began having to cap memberships to avoid overburdening the school cafeterias.

"[The school cafeterias] don't have much of a profit margin to begin with. The government and the Ministry of Education have regulations in place that clamp down on the ability of campus businesses to turn a profit," he said.

But those restrictions help hold the cost of a meal below 8 yuan, and compel cafeteria operators to ensure food quality and nutritional content.

There are 79 universities and 35 higher educational institutions in Beijing, and Hu and his group have dined at 50 of them.

"It's been a huge project – harder than we ever imagined. Most schools have more than three student cafeterias, and most provide between 50 and 100 dishes. We have to try them all to make sure our review of the cafeteria is fair," Hu said.

Dining on nostalgia

But for many in the group, low prices are not the real draw. Hu uses the dining events to connect with the campus culture he never had the chance to experience.

"From the first time I ate at Beijing Forestry University, I fell in love with the simple environment. I loved seeing so many young and energetic students talking and laughing loudly around me," he said.

Other group members come to recall their school days, to meet new friends or to look for a date.

"Students from science schools like Tsinghua University and Beijing University of Science and Technology are curious about students who attend art schools like Beijing Film Academy and Communication University of China," Wang said.

"One of the best ways to strike up a conversation with a pretty girl is over a meal."

Top 10 cafeterias of Beijing

1. Beijing Forestry University: The best and most nutritious food of any school cafeteria – its chefs cook from the heart.

Favorite Dish: Stir-fried, grilled pork for 2.5 yuan

2. Peking University: Government support has ensured the No. 1 Student Cafeteria at this university is able to serve more than 200 dishes at lunch and dinner. Its offerings include both Chinese and world cuisines.

Favorite Dish: Steamed rice for 0.5 yuan

3. University of International Business and Economics: Unlike most other cafeterias, its dishes resemble home cooking.

Favorite Dish: Kidney beans braised in soy sauce for 2.5 yuan

4. Beijing University of Technology: This school has six canteens that all serve food in generous portions.

Favorite Dish: Free egg-drop soup

5. China Institute of Industrial Relations: This institute offers the cheapest food of any school.

Favorite Dish: Stir-fried vegetables for 1 yuan

6. China Youth College for Political Science: A small but lovely cafeteria.

Favorite Dish: Self-serve hotpot for 12 yuan

7. Central Academy of Drama: This is a great place to go if you're hoping to run into a movie star – or at least one in the making.

Favorite Dish: Traditional Taiwan milk tea for 5 yuan

8. Renmin University: This large campus has seven cafeterias, but the one for overseas students is the best with its fantastic beef noodles.

Favorite Dish: Beef noodles for 5 yuan

9. Communication University of China: This school offers great cuisine from the country's ethnic minorities. The students from the broadcasting major have great voices.

Favorite Dish: Anything at the Yi-xiangyuan Sichuan Cafeteria

10. Agricultural University Eastern Campus: Many of the dishes here are made from organic ingredients grown by students and professors as part of their class assignments.

Favorite Dish: Fresh yogurt for 1.5 yuan; organic hard-boiled egg for 1 yuan

Designer handbags from online boutiques



Katherine Kwei's Lulu Small Tote, 3,920 yuan

By Annie Wei

Tired of fake Louis Vuitton, Prada and Dior? If you're older than 27 and aren't into kitsch, there's no reason to carry around a knockoff.

Cheesy leather handbags start at 2,000 yuan from department stores, so they aren't a good option. An alternative? Check out the online boutique Kate Zhou Handbags. *Beijing Today* recommends it for its unique items and quality work.

The founder, Kate Zhou, grew up in Beijing before going to the US to study. She has a passion for handbag design and fashion.

Zhou began a handbag blog in 2007, and the next year established her own brand, mainly to sell independent handbag designer pieces to Chinese mainland consumers.

Brands include Rebecca Minkoff, Olivia Harris, Treesje, Orla Kiely and Katherine Kwei. Each bag is directly purchased from the designers, starting from less than 1,000 yuan.

Among them, Rebecca Minkoff, the "it" girl brand, is only distributed through Kate Zhou's store. Minkoff was first known for her "I [heart] New York" T-shirt design in 2001, which was copied in many cities.

"I [heart] Beijing" T-shirts can be seen around town.

Today, many known stars and celebrities like Agyness Deyn, Lauren Conrad, Keira Knightley, Ashley Greene and Reese Witherspoon carry Rebecca Minkoff handbags.

Minkoff's style mixes the youthful spirit with an urban woman's sophistication, with a twist of vintage.

Other items, such as a shoulder bag (4,700 yuan), are more expensive. All purchases come with free delivery, and orders of 5,000 yuan or more are entitled to a 5 percent discount.

So far, Zhou has showrooms in three cities – Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Kate Zhou's Showroom

Where: 22F, Building C Kenzo Plaza, 48 Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 8 pm

Tel: 8447 7606

Website:

katezhou.taobao.com



Treesje's Jovi, 2,940 yuan



Rebecca Minkoff's red MAB clutch, 1,990 yuan



Olivia Harris' Jackie O Mini shoulder bag, 2,900 yuan

Olivia Harris is named after the daughter of designer Joy Gryson, who was the design director for popular brands like Coach, Calvin Klein and Marc Jacobs.



CC Skype's Annie Hall, 2,800 yuan, made of Italian lamb-skin, soft to the touch



Orla Kiely's Posey bag, 1,990 yuan

Orla Kiely, from Ireland, started her name brand in London in 1998. Her inspiration is from the 1960s and 1970s, and her style is a mix of vintage and modern.



Katherine Kwei's Edna Pouchette, 3,800 yuan

Kwei is a handbag designer from Hong Kong and likes using traditional Chinese elements like knots in modern handbags.



Rebecca Minkoff's pink pearl leather Boyfriend shoulder bag, 1,990 yuan



Rebecca Minkoff's Mini Mini bag, 2,990 yuan



Rebecca Minkoff's bright bronze leather Embrace 2011 spring, 2,190 yuan



Treesje's Spokes, 1,880 yuan

Photos provided by Kate Zhou Handbags

By Annie Wei

With its emphasis on fresh ingredients and olive oil, Italian food is considered a healthy option for diners.

Beijing Today visited two small Italian restaurants that are worthy of your patronage.

Quality Italian dishes at good prices

LMPlus – too small to handle the demand

LMPlus opened in Central Park last September with eight small tables inside, four seats at the bar area and another two or three chairs available outside if the weather is nice. Understandably, it's always packed.

Owner Massimo Masili, 38, who was born and raised in Sardinia, Italy, started in the restaurant business as a waiter at the age of 14. His passion for food and wine led him to open the restaurant L'isola in London, which is now run by a friend. After living in London for 10 years, he moved to Beijing in 2006.

"Massimo cares more about details," said Xiao Kaiping, a 27-year-old chef from Sichuan with experience in other Italian restaurants.

Requirements are high for LMPlus' chefs, as lots of preparation work goes into each dish.

Masili also changes his menu almost every two months or so, and 80 percent of the dishes are replaced each season.

Its business set lunch (59 yuan for two courses and 79 yuan for three) is a good deal. Office workers near The Place often swing by.

Two popular summer dishes are spring salad with onions, asparagus, olives, rocket tomatoes in extra virgin olive oil, and cherry tomatoes and mozzarella with fresh basil in balsamic dressing.

For the lunch set menu, the restaurant offers 11 kinds of soups and pastas. As tomato soup is such an important base for different kinds of dressing, LMPlus prepares it every day. The trick to making delicious tomato soup is mixing local fresh-peeled tomatoes with imported ones and stewing the blend with onions, celery, carrots and Italian herbs for at least an hour.

"Mixing two tomatoes makes the taste better," Xiao said. The local vs. import composition of tomatoes in the restaurant's soup is about one-third vs. two-thirds.

We also recommend the roasted porchetta with grilled vegetables. The boneless pork is rolled with smoked bacon, dry tomatoes, rosemary, salt and pepper and baked for two hours at 180 degrees. During the baking, it is taken out and salted several times to increase its flavor. When it's ready, the porchetta has a golden color.

The dinner menu, with more selections, is even better than the lunch.

The seared scallops and shrimp on asparagus in lemon dressing (72 yuan) are great. Three scallops and three shrimps are seared on a hot pan, then placed in the oven for two minutes. The asparagus is prepared in boiled water, then seared. The scallops and shrimp are placed on the asparagus and dressed with turnip sprouts, lemon dressing and olive oil. It's a beautiful dish. The scallops are fat, tender and slightly sweet.

The chef recommends the marinated salmon with fresh salad and basil pesto dressing (68 yuan). The salmon is marinated with orange and lemon zest, cumin seeds and rosemary. To give the grilled salmon a nice red color, it is marinated in beet root juice for 12



Spring salad, on lunch set menu



LMPlus' wine cellar hours ahead of time.

Our favorite dish was the porcini mushroom risotto (98 yuan). It's creamy and flavorful with a strong porcini aroma. The trick is to use only fresh porcini, which costs nearly 200 yuan per kilogram. The risotto is fried with olive oil, onion and white wine until it's medium cooked; it's then fried with porcini. Vegetable soup, prepared daily, is added, as is parmesan cheese and olive oil, and it's stirred until the risotto is barely sticky.

The chef also recommends traditional lasagna with beef ragout tomato and béchamel sauce (68 yuan). The beef ragout has to be stewed for two to three hours with tomatoes and peppers first. The pasta is baked with the beef ragout, cheese and sauce for 30 minutes at 190 degrees.

We also enjoyed LMPlus' slow-cooked lamb shank in Cannonau red wine with asparagus risotto (168 yuan). The lamb is rolled in flour and seared until it's gold. It's stewed with onion, celery, carrots, garlic, rosemary, red wine and pepper for two and a half hours.

The restaurant has a small cellar for storing wine and hosting wine tasting events. Diners who know Masili say he not only knows about cooking, but loves wine and takes it seriously as an art. He is a certificated sommelier.

About 80 percent of the cellar is filled with Italian wine. People can find a glass of Prosecco Belstar from Italy starting at 59 yuan, or red Perdera Monica di Sardegna at 75 yuan. A bottle of Solaia, Antinori (2001) from Tuscany is 5,880 yuan, and Spess, Gaja (1998) from Piedmont is 11,800 yuan.

Masili will open a pizza restaurant at the end of this month at Central Park.

LMPlus

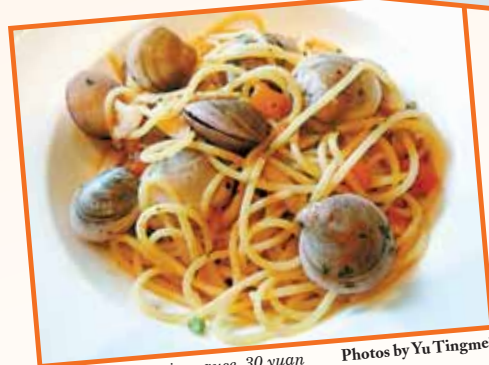
Where: 103, Tower 10, Central Park, 6 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am – 1 am next day
Tel: 6533 6366
Cost: Starting from 59 yuan per person



Seared scallops and shrimp on asparagus in lemon dressing, 72 yuan
Photos by Sun Xiaoping



Mushroom salad, 16 yuan



Clams in white wine sauce, 30 yuan
Photos by Yu Tingmei

Alioolio Italian restaurant – Newly opened

The newly opened Alioolio at Chaoyang Park's west gate has attracted many neighborhood residents for its inexpensive dishes, bevy of options and cozy ambiance.

Its homemade Italian dishes include nine kinds of risotto and 19 kinds of pastas and sauces. There are also salads and pizzas.

One can order in small servings, making them very affordable. For example, the small salad only costs 14 to 16 yuan. Pastas start at 18 yuan. One can try the pine nuts, garlic, fresh basil leaf, olive oil and parmesan cheese pasta (28 yuan), the clams in white wine sauce (30 yuan) or fresh lobster with fresh tomato sauce and olive oil (158 yuan).

The house wine starts at 20 yuan per glass, 89 yuan per bottle. Coffee is around 15 yuan.

Alioolio

Where: 1 Chaoyang Gongyuan Xi Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 11 am – 11 pm
Tel: 6594 0938
Cost: Average 40 yuan per person

Chinese artist in France 'returns' to motherland

By Zhang Dongya

A retrospective exhibition on Tang Haywen, a Chinese-born artist who spent most of his life in Paris, is open until June 25 at Yishu 8 Gallery.

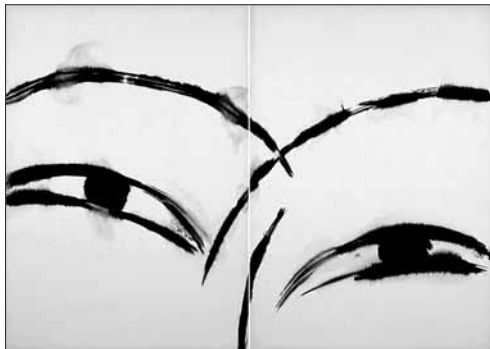
This marks the first time Tang's paintings are being presented on the mainland. A similar retrospective exhibition was held at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in Taiwan in 1997.

Tang, born in 1927 in Xiamen, Fujian Province, moved to Paris in 1948 and stayed there until 1991.

"It has been nearly exactly 20 years since Tang Haywen passed away. We are honored to have this exhibition at Yishu 8," said Jean-Paul Desroches, guest curator of the exhibition.

On display are more than 50 of Tang's works, including studies and diptychs. Most were done on paper or absorbent card stock. The studies include gouaches and washes, which are so small that they are more like travel notes for recording fleeting events.

Diptych is the juxtaposition of two sheets to make one work. Tang painted landscapes using water, ink and



watercolor, combining the traditional abstract wash with the European tradition of using luminous colors.

"Tang is one of the three great [Chinese] masters in France, along with Chu Teh-chun and Zao Wou-ki," Desroches said.

It's Tang, however, who's considered the most unique.

"China-Paris was an important step for China to recognize a number of its overseas artists," said Philippe Koutouzis, a friend of Tang's and an expert

on his works. "But Tang, unlike the others, did not pursue fame or try to establish a style he could sell. He was like a butterfly spending his time exercising his liberty and practicing detachment."

Tang's artwork gained wider public appeal after his death. So far, his works have been collected in many large museums and galleries in Europe.

"Tang obliterates himself; he

gives us not something to see, but rather something to reflect upon, a way to look into ourselves and remember through the transparent mirror of his painting," Koutouzis said.

Desroches said Tang's works will win more recognition sooner or later.

The exhibition, organized with the support of the French embassy, is part of the Festival Croisements for cultural exchange between China and France.

A large retrospective exhibition on Tang is scheduled for next year, to be organized by Desroches and Fan Di'an, director of the National Art Museum of China.

Tang Haywen Ink & Watercolor

Where: Yishu 8 Gallery, Cable 8 Factory, 8 Langjiayuan, Jiangguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 25, daily except Sunday, 10 am - 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6581 9058

Friday, June 10

5

Exhibition Land and Body Group Exhibition

This exhibition, as an

important part of Imagine Australia, the Year of Australian Culture in China, will display images of Australia's Western Desert. The size and scope of the tour is unprecedented: no exhibition of Australian indigenous art has featured as many works or will travel to as many places around China.

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 26, daily except Monday, 10 am - 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 0600

Nightlife

The Bad Taste

Local punk bands Cha Cha, Pacalolo and Hang on the Box express the concept of "bad taste" on T-shirts and in music, presenting freedom and passion.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111

Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 15611891282

Movie



The Tango Lesson (1997)

Director Sally is struggling with her new play, so she decides to learn to tango. On a trip to Paris she meets Pablo, a tango dancer, and predictably falls in love.

Where: Sculpting in Time Cafe, Beihang University, 37 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8231 0664

Sunday, June 12

Exhibition Video Art for All - International Video Art Festival 2010

Artists are shown working behind the scenes in video and performance art as they prepare for the International Video Art Festival. Only a handful of 180 submitted works were chosen for presentation.

Where: AFA Beijing Contemporary Art Centre, E6-3

Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 31, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: free

Tel: 6432 1562

Movie

12 Angry Men (1957)

This OCIC Award-winning film tells the story of a dissenting juror in a murder trial who slowly manages to convince the others that the case is not as straightforward as it seems.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 6:30 pm

Admission: 25 yuan

Tel: 8404 4166

Nightlife

Envy China Tour

The popular Japanese hardcore post-rock band Envy began a global tour after releasing its fifth album, *Recitation*, last year. This is Envy's first China tour.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng

District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 180 yuan

advance purchase, 200 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711



(By Xinji Letu)

Upcoming

Nightlife

Diana Quartet

Coming from the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, Diana is known for her soulful, smoky voice and jazz melodies. Over the past four years, she has built a successful music career performing in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: June 16, 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door

Tel: 6401 5269

Stage in July

Concert

Chen Sa Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-400 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dresden Philharmonic

Children's Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: July 12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-100 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

King's College Choir

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-400 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Lorin Maazl and Castleton

Festival Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 29-30, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Grand Ballet of Montreal

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 20-21, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

On the Road

Where: Nine Theater (TNT), Chaoyang Culture Center, 12 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: July 5-10, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-500 yuan, 50 yuan for students

Tel: 6551 6930

Some Kind of Poison

Where: Multi-functional Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: July 20-29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Purcell's Dido and Aeneas

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: July 15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-100 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

(By He Jianwei)

WHO fingers phones as cancer causers

By Han Manman

It may seem difficult to imagine having to go a day without your cell phone. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) is suggesting there could be a link between cell phone use and cancer.

And that's causing millions of users to consider dialing back their dependence.

Phones tied to brain cancer

Microwave radiation emitted through mobiles phones might cause cancer, according to a warning issued by the WHO last week to heavy phone users.

The report, based on a study by 21 scientists in 14 countries, revealed that the microwave radiation emitted by mobile phones disrupts glucose levels in the brain and may stimulate the formation of brain tumors.

"That means there could be some risk, and therefore we need to keep a close watch for a link between cell phones and cancer risk," said Jonathan Samet from the University of Southern California, chairman of the group of scientists.

The European Environmental Agency has pushed for more studies, saying cell phones could be as big a public health risk as smoking, asbestos and leaded gasoline. The head of a prominent cancer-research institute at the University of Pittsburgh sent a memo to all employees urging them to limit cell phone use because of a possible risk of cancer.

"Cancer, especially brain cancer, usually takes a long time to develop. I think it is a good idea to give the public some sort of warning that long-term exposure to radiation from your cell phone could cause cancer," said Dr. Henry Lai, a research professor in bioengineering at the University of Washington who has studied radiation for more than 30 years.

China users need not panic

The WHO's latest warning scared many in China, which recently became the first country to reach 900 million cell phone users, according to statistics released in April.

But radiation medicine experts Cheng Aiping at Zhejiang People's Hospital said Chinese cell phone users shouldn't rush to dump their phones over mere theories.

"These findings show limited evidence linking mobile phones to glioma and acoustic neuroma and inadequate evidence to draw a relationship to other types of cancer," said Cheng, a radiologist with 20 years of experience.

"However, it does sound like a warning bell and highlights the need for more research in this area," she said.

Cheng said radiation can be divided into non-ionizing radiation and ionizing radiation. She said ionizing radiation, the kind used in X-rays and CT scans, directly damages human cells. But household appliances like mobile phones emit non-ionizing radiation that does not have a serious effect on health.

Cheng said her clinical study has not found any relationship between mobile phone use and brain tumors.

"If the cell phone can pass our

national radiation standard, it will not directly affect one's health," she said.

She did warn that mobile phone users might want to exercise some caution with children, whose bodies and developing brain tissue may be more susceptible to the minimal radiation emitted by phones.

She said children's skulls and scalps are thinner, and that radiation can more easily penetrate deeper into the brains of children and young adults. Because their cells are dividing at a faster rate, the impact of radiation can be more serious.

Zhang Dezhi, deputy director of the China Consumers Association's consumer guidance department, warned that phone users should avoid *shanzhai* mobile phones, which often greatly exceed national radiation limits.

Shanzhai refers to imitation or pirate goods, especially mobile phones and computer laptops. Most of these devices are produced in the southern city of Shenzhen. Studies have found that 20 percent of Chinese consumers use *shanzhai* phones.

Zhang said some of the phones have been tested and found to emit more than 50 times more radiation than the national limit.



CFP Photo

Tips for reducing exposure

Cheng advised people to minimize potential risk even if studies are not yet conclusive.

1. Distance yourself. You may have noticed people holding their phones in front of their mouths while talking. This is not a bad idea. Users should also consider headsets and Bluetooth in-ear units, since these accessories emit much less radiation than phones.
2. Hold the phone away from yourself while dialing, as this procedure generates the most radiation.
3. Talk less. Anytime the phone is away from your head, you are reducing your

exposure to harmful radiation. Texting is preferable to talking. The phone emits radiation when you talk or text but not when you're receiving messages. Limit direct use to less than 30 minutes per day.

4. Check your phone's signal strength before you make a call. If the signal is weak, the phone will emit significantly more radiation to make the call. Move to a better location or delay the call until you have a better signal. Phones also emit more radiation when their battery is low.
5. If you're keeping your

cell phone in a pocket or close to your body, turn it off. If you must keep your cell phone on, keep the key pad towards your body, so the back end — with the antenna — faces out. Experts warn that men who use cell phones too often tend to have decreased sperm count and potency.

6. Opt for 3G phones, which emit less radiation than 2G phones.
7. Limit your children's use of cell phones. Doctors recommend that children under 16 use cell phones only for essential calls because their brains and nervous systems are still developing.

Historic Jiaxing in southern China

By Zhang Dongya

Jiaxing, located in northeast Zhejiang Province, is a small southern city with an important geographic role in the Yangtze River delta. Wedged between Hangzhou and Suzhou, it adopted the elegant beauty of the classical southern city and has also found fame for the delicacy of its zongzi – classic glutinous rice cakes wrapped in bamboo leaves – and the two ancient towns of Wuzhen and Xitang.



Jiaxing, a small southern city, has adopted the elegant beauty of the classic water country.

CFP Photo



Old houses with white walls and black tiles stand beside the river along Yuehe Ancient Street.

Photos by Mockingbird



Shops, restaurants, pawnshops and teahouses on Yuehe block try to recreate the area's former prosperity.



Red Boat on South Lake

CFP Photo

Historic South Lake

Nanhu, or South Lake, along with Hangzhou's West Lake and Shaoxing's East Lake, make up Zhejiang Province's three famous lakes.

South Lake is known as the birthplace of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In 1921, the First National Congress was held on a painted boat on South Lake, officially announcing the founding of the CPC. The boat was reproduced in South Lake and named "Red Boat" to memorialize the historic event.

The South Lake Revolution Museum was built in 1959 at Huxin Island at the center of South Lake – and later moved to the island's opposite bank – to memorialize the CPC's founding. Inside are historic documents and cultural relics.

Huxin Island was formed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It is a typical southern garden with a pavilion called Yanyulou ("Mist and Rain") and rockery.

One experience includes eating Jiaxing cuisine on a boat on South Lake.

Locals describe their food as "He cuisine," because Jiaxing used to be called Jiahe. Water chestnut is one of the area's specialties, and can be cooked in many different ways.

Admission to South Lake Scenic Area: 60 yuan (including Huxin Island, South Lake Revolution Museum and Lanxiu Garden)

Open: 8 am – 6 pm

Yuehe – ancient block

Not far from South Lake is Yuehe Ancient Street. The old block consists of buildings constructed in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), all with white walls and black tiles. It is the largest and best-preserved ancient block in Jiaxing. Old houses built beside the river still stand, showing what life is like "Jiangnan" – south of the Yangtze River.

Many time-honored brands can be found at Yuehe, as this was a prosperous commercial street during the Republic of China period (1912-1949). About 200 shops, including restaurants, pawnshops, teahouses and foreign goods, have moved there, trying to recreate the area's former prosperity.

Old-time restaurants like Lugaojian and Zoudaxian are highly recommended, where visitors can experience authentic Jiaxing cuisine.

Among the themed streets in the area are a flower, bird and fish street; antique street; hotel street; and bar street. Stone bridges connect some of these streets, adding flavor to the country.

In some old houses, you will find unique paintings called "cooking bench paintings." In ancient times, they were found in kitchens, featuring birds, flowers and landscapes.

The early morning, just as the city wakes, is the best time to walk up and down the ancient block.

Admission to Yuehe ancient street: Free
Admission to Dragon Boat Festival Museum, Dachang Pawnshop, Exhibition of Cooking Bench Paintings: 10 yuan for each

Continued on page 21...



CFP Photo



A dragon boat race on Jiaxing's South Lake happens every year during Dragon Boat Festival. CFP Photos



Visitors can see many old houses built during late Qing and early Republic of China period.



The narrowest alley in Xitang

Photo by Mockingbird

...continued from page 20

A city of zongzi

Jiaxing is famous for its zongzi, and the city just may produce the best in the country. Shops and stores sell zongzi everywhere. Glutinous rice is also shaped into various sculptures.

Wufangzhai is the most well-known brand, first formed during the Qing Dynasty. The modern Wufangzhai zongzi was founded in 1921, featuring authentic flavors from southern China.

Interested tourists can visit the factory and look upon thousands of workers wrapping zongzi.

In Yuehe ancient block, you'll find the Zongzi Culture Museum, displaying the culture of Dragon Boat Festival and zongzi. According to legend, the Dragon Boat Festival began as a way of commemorating the Chu kingdom poet and statesman Qu Yuan, who committed suicide by jumping in the Miluo River around 300 BC. In order to prevent his body from being eaten by fish, villagers threw zongzi in the water as feed.

The museum has collected a large number of old photos, paintings, calligraphy and sculptures, telling the history of Jiaxing's zongzi and the evolution

of old brands such as Wufangzhai and Changji. It will help visitors learn more about the traditional festival and the associated foods.

Xitang, a civilian town

Some say Jiaxing has two of the best ancient towns in the country: Wuzhen and Xitang. The latter is the more modern and livable of the two.

Xitang, or "West Pool," features old houses along the river and old bridges, with wooden boats floating on water. Red lanterns hang under high and low eaves, with camphor trees and willows dotting the banks.

The most famous section, which appeared in *Mission: Impossible 3* in 2006, still attracts many visitors and photographers.

There is a narrow lane in Xitang called Shipi Long, narrower than similar alleys in Xi'an and Chengdu. It is about 68 meters long with high building on either side. It is said the ground was paved using 168 stones. At the narrowest place, only one person can squeeze through. The mottled walls are gray and white, and old-style lamps and lanterns can be seen.

Sheets and bedclothes are commonly seen hanging outside Xitang homes. Villagers wash clothes in the

river while dogs run about.

On the riverbank are several homes housing local villagers. The wooden doors are shabby, with faded scrolls and couplets. Simple furniture can be seen from the door. At dusk, groups of pupils will cross the stone bridge on their way home from school. The people here usually leave their doors open, so one can glance inside these houses and see locals preparing food or children doing their homework.

When night falls, all the lamps and lanterns get lit and reflect off the water. The bar street becomes bustling. While some head off to bed, others' nights are just beginning.

Getting to Xitang: Take a bus from Jiaxing North Bus Station to Xitang, which takes about 50 minutes and costs 7 yuan. Or take a half-hour train, which costs 15 yuan.

Admission: 50 yuan. It is free before 8 am and after 8 pm.

Getting to Jiaxing: Take an airplane to Hangzhou or Shanghai then train to Jiaxing. The fast train takes less than half an hour from Hangzhou to Jiaxing (41 yuan). The train takes about 40 minutes from Shanghai and costs 26 yuan.



Xitang is a rare ancient town where locals still live as they used to.

Photo by Mockingbird



In the famous Wufangzhai zongzi factory, visitors can watch workers wrapping glutinous rice cakes in bamboo leaves.

Education

Kids creative challenge free for next 30 days at Drama Rainbow

Hey mom! Do you have a creative kid hiding inside your child?

Drama Rainbow, China's drama in education specialist, is offering free demo classes for children between the ages of 3 and 8 in British Creativity. Come see what made this program so popular in Europe for the past several years with a free demo class and creativity evaluation any weekend through July 31.

An hour at Drama Rainbow will show you why and how children learn faster through play, and why it is more important how they think than what they think. Our staff of international teachers hails from six countries, and 67 percent of the school's students arrive via teacher and parent referrals.

At Drama Rainbow, children learn how to learn through interactive role play within imaginative stories that teach real-life lessons. Children will learn to unleash their imagination, solve problems, make choices and think creatively on their own. Nothing builds self-confidence, increases focus or accelerates social and communication skills faster.

Call to schedule a free demo before July 31. Prepare to be amazed by your child and his or her hidden creative side!

Where: Drama Rainbow, 7F, A2 Zone, Building 12, Wanquan Xinxin Jiayuan, Haidian District

When: Before July 31

Tel: 8255 2978



Shangri-La presents Shang Junior Children's Club

Shang Junior at Shangri-La Hotel Beijing offers children a place to learn, play and have fun in safety. The club was inaugurated this Children's Day.

At Shang Junior, children will get the chance to learn to participate in activities such as sushi- and cookies-making, flower arranging, non-alcoholic cocktail mixing and drawing. The hotel also houses a children's playroom with a variety of entertainment facilities. Children need no longer feel bored on weekends: send them to Shang Junior to make new friends, improve their dexterity, apply their imaginations and exercise their minds.

Summer splendor at the Peninsula Beijing

From June 1 to August 31, enrich your life and cool off with Peninsula's Summer Splendor offer. Rooms start at 1,588 yuan per night with a daily buffet breakfast for two at Jing, a collection of value-added benefits, airport transfer and a spa voucher.

Choose from the bonus of round trip limou-

sine airport transfers, afternoon tea for two at The Lobby Lounge and a 400-yuan spa voucher for any treatment at The Peninsula Spa by ESPA. Guests continue to enjoy a host of standard hotel benefits such as in-room wired and wireless Internet, access to the fitness center and swimming pool, turn-down service, tea and coffee-making facilities and a local daily newspaper. Guests staying in suites can enjoy access to the Club Lounge.

Where: Peninsula Beijing, 8 Jinyu Hutong, Dongdan Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until August 31

Tel: 8516 2888



Grand Millennium Beijing stay-3-pay-2 promotion

The Grand Millennium is offering a great rate starting from 1,200 yuan on minimum stays of three consecutive nights. The offer is not valid in conjunction with other promotions. Rooms are subject to availability and prior reservations are required. Group Bookings are not eligible for this promotion. Additional nights will be billed at best available rates.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 31

Cost: from 1,200 yuan (15 percent gratuity)
Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 5888

Email:

reservations@grandmillenniumbeijing.com

Dining



Business express set lunch

The award-winning restaurant Daccapo is introducing an efficient and casual way to enjoy its modern Italian menu and service.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

When: Monday to Friday, 11:30 am - 2 pm

Cost: 128 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity) for any combination of two items including a soup, salad, main course or dessert; 158 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity) for a three-course combination

Tel: 8522 1789



Say cheese

Great cheeses from Australia, China, France and Spain paired with wines from southern France are not to be missed this summer at Grange. The tailor-made cheese and wine counter will provide cheese lovers with abundant choices. The free tastings are sure to make your dining experience a delight.

Where: Grange, The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 7 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 30

Tel: 5922 8880

Airline

Jetstar helps students study in Singapore

With the number of Chinese students studying abroad increasing, students have become an important customer for Singapore's tourism and commerce.

The Ministry of Education said some 229,300 Chinese students went abroad during the 2009 and 2010 academic year, a 30 percent increase over previous years.

Jetstar Asia CEO Chong Phit Lian said Singapore, because of its cultural intimacy with China and good value, was one of the most popular destinations for Chinese students pursuing university study in Asia.

"Currently, one third of the 50,000 overseas students in tertiary studies in Singapore come directly from China," Chong said.

"The growing student market in Singapore is influenced by two key factors — price and accessibility. As such, Jetstar is well positioned to support the education sector in Singapore to reap greater student numbers through our ever-growing Chinese network," she said.

Chong said that airfare offered by low cost airlines such as Jetstar could be a solution of Chinese students planning their budgets for study in Asia.

She said Jetstar provides a number of options to Chinese parents and their children to help them travel smart while studying abroad.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Li Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

A couple friends talking breakups and ambulance-chasing



By Li Zhixin

Ever since her abrupt breakup, Jane Lee has been acting spacey.

She can't disentangle herself from memories of her ex, and really can't believe he dumped her after a seven-year relationship in favor of his boss, an assertive and calculating woman.

The breakup has been affecting her in the worst ways.

Last Thursday, she left work early and hopped on a bus. Her mind was on her late relationship the entire way. She was so preoccupied that she didn't notice when the conductor called out her stop.

When she realized she had to get off, she dashed for the door and got her leg caught while the rest of her body was outside.

She knocked on the door but no one noticed. As the bus began moving, she clung to the window and shouted for help.

When someone finally saw, he had the driver open the door. The bus kept

moving, however.

Lee took a tumble and was lucky to have not been badly injured.

"Thank goodness I saved my life," she said, recalling the incident to her friend, Maggie. "It was really a terrible experience, but I waved off the driver and conductor when I realized I was OK. Of course, they were also frightened like ducks in a thunderstorm."

"Why didn't you ask them for compensation?" Maggie said. "It's unbelievable you let them go away without any compensation. What a fool you are!"

For not extorting money from them, apparently.

"I'm not an ambulance chaser," Lee said gently.

"But they didn't call an ambulance for you!"

"I mean, I don't want to take advantage of them. I know they also have a hard life in the big city. If I make a complaint, they may

face a hefty fine and even lose their jobs. I didn't want to make things worse. Anyway, it was also partly my fault."

"But you should have at least asked them to send you to the hospital for a thorough examination!" Maggie insisted. "I will inform your mother of this. You don't even know how to protect yourself."

"No, please don't. If my parents find out, they will have ants in their pants."

"What? How can ants enter into their pants?"

"I mean they'll be all restless and worried. I don't want them to be worried about me. Please trust me, everything will be OK, tomorrow is another day."

While talking, Lee realized that it all came down to her breakup.

"Just talk with me," she said. "I need a break from all the bad memories."

"Well, say anything you like as long as you feel better," Maggie said, being a good friend at last. "I'm at your disposal now."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Cash Recycling Machine

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

I can't decide: would I like a Cash Recycling Machine or not? You know, if you popped in a fiver and the machine turned it into a 100 — a real one — that would be all right. I could get into that kind of recycling.

However, it is more likely that you would slip in a fiver and the machine would spit out a 100 with a Pleasant Goat on one side and a Bad Bad Wolf on the other.

Worse, the machine would mash everyone's notes together and, once a month, the lucky prizewinner would get a papier-mâché horse! Or a giant radish, filled with a pinata-fest of sugar goodness! Or some other equally artistic, fascinating piece of finery to place above your fireplace.



I don't have a fireplace and I don't think I'm fooling anyone. Of course, this is simply an ATM (automatic teller, bank machine, money machine, Frank, whatever you choose to call it). My kids are

amazed by its magic — stick in card, put out wads of cash. I myself am fairly disillusioned by the process of getting the wads in there in the first place, as well as by the mysterious fees that come off every time you use it — fees that the non-automated bank tellers can't explain. Instead, they tell you to call the automated hotline, which no real person ever answers ...

Let's look at the sign. The first character is *cun* (deposit), then *qu* (withdraw), and *kuan* (cash; *daikuan* means a loan, such as a mortgage). Then *yi* (one) with *ti* (body) makes *yiti* ("one body," or all-in-one), and the last character is *ji* (machine).

Unfortunately, whoever added the "recycling" part was really just displaying wishful thinking!

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. All you can eat dim sum.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZSD): Is it all right? It sounds strange. There is all which you can eat. What does it matter with "dim sum"? There is a problem with the word order. As the word order is wrongly placed, it is a wrong sentence. Actually, it means there is all the dim sum that you can choose, that you can eat. So, it should be: All the dim sum you can eat. In this way, it is a right sentence. Similarly, we say: All the jobs you can choose from. You will not say: All you can choose from the jobs.

TBZ: This is a difference between "correct sentences" and "advertising English." The purpose of an advertisement is to get you into the restaurant and make you believe that you are getting a good deal. I would like to add hyphens, but they are optional: All-you-can-eat dim sum. Posted in red-lettering on a big sign, with flashy lights, my sign would likely bring in a lot of business. In fact, "dim sum" isn't really English; it is an example of a word which has transferred over from Cantonese.

2. They contain much more than that meets the eye.

ZSD: There is a similar mistake here: you take care of your head while forgetting your tail. You should know that in this case the phrase "more than" should not be followed by a subordinate clause. It should be followed by a noun clause; that is to say, a noun clause led by "what." So, the right way to say this should be: They contain much more than what meets the eye. However, in the example, "what" can be omitted: His help to me is more than is generally deemed. In this case, it actually is: His help to me is more than (what) is generally deemed.

TBZ: If I could not take out the whole overused expression, at least I would take out "that." They contain much more than meets the eye. That's a difference between English and Chinese — in Chinese, the correct use of an expression shows a higher level of education and culture. In English, such expressions tend to be popular low-class sayings, best to be avoided.

3. I like online literature. They are more convenience.

ZSD: First of all, it is the consistency that matters. "Online literature" is abstract in meaning and is singular. Then, when you come to the next sentence, you forget it. You use "they" instead of "it." Such a problem is usually overlooked by the writer, yet it is important for good writing and to a good writer. So, the right way to say this is: I like online literature. It is more convenient (not convenience, the noun!). Today, we have talked about "the head and the tail" of writing a good sentence. We have to take care of the head as well as the tail.

TBZ: I see this type of error all the time. It is possible that this occurs because a Chinese student has formed a Chinese sentence in his mind and is translating it into English onto the page. This is not a bad thing, but it is what beginners do. As one's English improves, one can start to think in English and write sentences directly, without translating them.

Also, in this example, there is a jump in the thought process: "online literature" (singular) in the first sentence, "articles" (plural) in the second and, as the professor has said, the writer must carefully guide the reader clearly through this thought process. It is an easy mistake to make! Find a good proofreader to help you out. As for "convenience," well, that is just a mistake.



“Time heals all.”

Finding a reason to live on

By Xinji Letu

What follows the emptiness of a goal completed? How does one ever overcome such a loss of purpose? Tibetan director Sonthar Gyal gives an answer in *The Sun Beaten Path*, his first film.

This story of redemption begins with a family tragedy in the remote mountains of Tibet.

When Nima, a young Tibetan, loses his mother in a motorcycle accident, he is unable to shake the feeling that he was responsible for her death. Seeking to cleanse his guilt the boy sets out on a pilgrimage to Lhasa.

“The film is based on a real story. When I first heard of it, I was shocked. I kept asking myself what I would do if I was the boy,” Gyal said. “In traditional Tibetan culture, a trip to Lhasa seems like the best choice.”

Making a kowtow at every step, Nima travels for two years to arrive in the capital. But even after prostrating himself and seeing the face of Buddha, he is unable to shake off his guilt. The young man is overcome by a sense of loss.

Nima takes a long-distance bus to return home. With his pilgrimage over, he is left with no clue about how to continue his life.

“I think everyone in real life has faced these moments of total confusion – moments where only time will help us get used to a change. When things change too fast, body and soul can end up derailed,” Gyal said.

Gyal said his story is one of redemption. “I interviewed many pilgrims. Most of them told me that their greatest fear was waking up the next morning in Lhasa and not knowing where to go after that,” Gyal said. “It is like they are drained after reaching this great goal, and life suddenly becomes meaningless.”

Gyal spent two years trying to find an answer in his film.

Racked by guilt and grief, Nima wanders through the Gobi and meets an old man who is returning from his daughter's wedding.

The old man feels similarly lost after seeing his son and

daughter married off. He does not know what to do next except wait for death. Learning of Nima's bitterness, he decides to follow the boy on his journey through the barren desert.

The two loners barely speak on their journey, though the old man's few plain words of wisdom gradually influence Nima. The old man's attitude toward life and the way he faces change make Nima reconsider his existence and find the courage to come home.

“It's a case of self-discovered salvation. The nature of life inspires [Nima] to become a real man,” Gyal said.

The director said he has seen many pilgrims in his life, and that the most touching trait of any pilgrim is the purity of their thought. “They are like mirrors that reflect my ugly soul when I speak with them,” he said.

As the name of the film implies, it is a long journey from Nema's hometown to Lhasa, and the strong sunlight always comes from the same direction. Many pilgrims have one darker side due to this odd angle of sun exposure. “Pain does not change, because you cannot change the angle of the sun. You can only change yourself to endure.”

In the end, Nima returns to his

hometown. When his brother meets him at the village entrance, their reunion is marked by silence.

“When I wrote the scene in my Beijing's apartment, tears were streaming down my face,” Gyal said. “There was no need to blame what had happened on anyone or anything. When they see each other, they understand that life goes on.”

The story ends with the older brother saying to Nima, “Let's go home.”

Gyal's directorial debut is filmed entirely in Tibetan. This first entry in his Tibetan Sunlight Trilogy was awarded a Special Mention at the 35th Hong Kong International Film Festival and was nominated for the Asian New Talent Award at the 14th Shanghai International Film Festival, where it will open this weekend.

Although the film is about life and death, Gyal uses it as a vehicle to tell the world his philosophy: “When your life is wrapped tightly by darkness, you should find a light spot and give yourself a reason to live on,” he said.



Racked by guilt and grief, Nima (right) wanders through the Gobi, where he meets an old man.

Photos provided by UCCA

The Sun Beaten Path

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: June 11, 4 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269

